THE AMERICAN WEST

Among the most startling cultural changes witnessed in the history or prehistory of western America was the societal revolution within many Indian groups wrought by the introduction of the horse. With the horse, Indians from both east of the Mississippi and west of the Rockies became not only the prairie warriors of popular imagination, but a people far more affluent than they had once been; and with social change came such customs as offering sometimes very large payments for likely brides.

Why should a wealthy Cheyenne or Blackfoot pay for a woman? As Peter Farb suggests in his current book, **Man's Rise to Civilization as Shown by the Indians of North America from Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State,** "It took only a moment for a man on horseback to kill a bison with a bullet, but it still remained a long and arduous task for his wife to dress the hide for the white trader. As a result, a shortage of women arose and a premium was placed on them." (For more of Peter Farb's observations on the cultural patterns of the American Indian, see the article beginning on page 18.)

"Barter for a Bride" is the title of our cover painting; the buyer is seen on the front, the seller's party on the back cover. The painting is by John Mix Stanley and today hangs in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the State Department Building, Washington.

John C. Ewers, author of **Artists of the Old West** (1965), informs us that "Stanley was official artist for Isaac L. Stevens's northernmost of the Pacific Railway surveys in the mid-1850's. This painting almost certainly was made after Stanley's experience with that survey. I believe it is probably an upper Missouri scene, and that the artist may represent the Great Falls of the Missouri in the background—the falls which Lewis and Clark had so much difficulty in portaging around on their first great overland trek up the Missouri in the summer of 1805. Stanley was a member of the first official United States exploring party to pass that way since Lewis and Clark. The Indians depicted most probably are Blackfeet."

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE WESTERN HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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Image from a Haida Totem Pole. (Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley)

OFF TO THE PLAINS!

One of the great illustrators of Victorian England, Arthur Boyd Houghton came West in 1870 and brought to the readers of the London Graphic a fresh and compelling view of the American frontier. "I know drawings of his," said Vincent Van Gogh. "He has something rather mysterious like Goya..."

BY PAUL HOGARTH

IN VICTORIAN TIMES the British middle classes got their idea of what the rest of the world looked like from elaborately drawn illustrations in the weekly picture papers of London. These were seldom equaled for the quality and thoroughness of pictorial coverage. Each paper had its own team of "Special Artists," more or less permanently employed, who traveled from one side of the world to the other, reporting on life and events in distant lands.

Foremost among these journals was the *Graphic* (1869-1932), founded and edited by William Luson Thomas, master engraver and close acquaintance of Charles Dickens. Thomas, who held very decided opinions about pictorial journalism, sent artists out to picture the human dramas enacted daily in city streets, railway stations, lodging houses, post offices, and homes for the aged. He knew that even if presented in the most realistic terms, these scenes would be of great interest to the average reader. At the same time, Thomas felt that newspaper illustrations should be enjoyed for their value as works of art as well as for their truth and closeness to life; and he had no problem finding the right artists to work for him. Since the early 1860's he had been engraving their works for such famous magazines as *Good Words, The Quiver, Once a Week,* and *London Society.*

The *Graphic* soon established a world-wide reputation for the superior quality of its illustrations. Reprinted throughout Europe and the United States, they exerted such a profound influence on both sides of the Atlantic that it became a custom among artists—professional and amateur—to send drawings to the *Graphic.* Even Vincent Van Gogh was moved to make speculative drawings "from the people, for the people" but was too timid to submit them.

Van Gogh envied the ease of communication that the "Special Artist," or artist-reporter, appeared to enjoy. Between 1881 and 1883, he sought to develop his own drawing as a medium of contact with others; the dream of becoming a contributor to the illustrated papers obsessed him. His indefatigable brother, Theo, kept him in touch with anything of interest in the latest issues. Theo's reports, plus a chance discovery of a set of bound volumes of the *Graphic* for 1870-1875 in a Hague auction, touched off a highly interesting correspondence between Van Gogh and another Dutch painter, Anton Van Rappard. In these letters there were repeated references to the English artist, Arthur Boyd Houghton, and his drawings of the American West.

After scraping up the money to buy the volumes, Van Gogh told

Accustomed to the gentle pursuits of his London studio, Arthur Boyd Houghton nevertheless took great relish in the rigors of the American frontier. In the drawing at the left, he recorded for the readers of the London Graphic the travails of crossing a canyon in the sandhill country west of Fort McPherson.

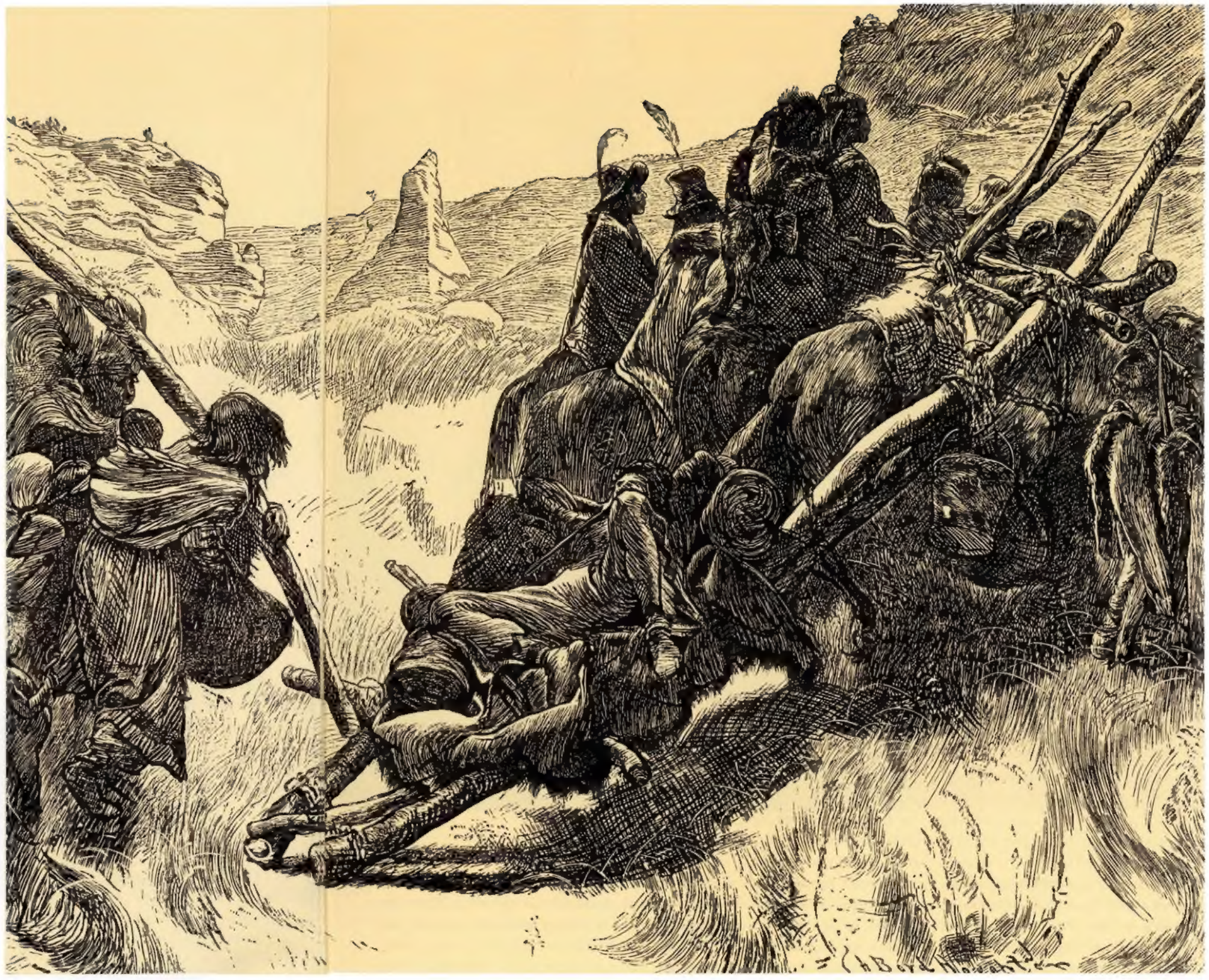
Rappard that he had "looked through them far into the night," finding "drawings by Boyd Houghton about America. . . . I had no idea he was so interesting." Learning of the Englishman's untimely death in 1875, Van Gogh asked his brother to find out what he could about him. "I know drawings of his," the artist wrote, "of Quakers, and a Mormon church, and Indian women, and immigrants," adding that "he has something rather mysterious like Goya, with a wonderful soberness which reminds me of Meryon."

Van Gogh had every reason to feel excited. He had stumbled across one of the most interesting, yet little-known chronicles of the West: Arthur Boyd Houghton's "Sketches in the Far West," which appeared in the *Graphic* between July, 1870, and February, 1875, as the second half of a series of illustrated impressions entitled "Graphic America."

Houghton's western illustrations in the *Graphic* differ from the usual gray engravings we are accustomed to seeing in Victorian journals. In the days before photomechanical techniques of reproduction, drawings had to be transcribed or duplicated on the woodblock; but Houghton's were reproduced with a comparative freshness. His method, taught by the celebrated master engravers, the brothers Dalziel, was to draw in pen and ink on a boxwood block thinly coated with Chinese white to resemble the texture of paper. The drawing was incisive and the composition bold; white space was juxtaposed to black shape. Working in a medium that usually erased the idiosyncrasies of an artist's style, he succeeded in creating a strongly personal flavor.

Houghton's life was as tragically short as that of his admirer, Van Gogh—he died at the age of thirty-nine. The facts that filtered through the recollections of friends and colleagues revealed him as an impulsive and generous personality. Edmund J. Sullivan, an early biographer, described him as a bohemian with a boisterous love of life. He was born in Bombay, it is thought, where his father, Captain Michael Houghton, was private secretary to Sir John Malcolm, governor of the province, which at that time was under British administration. In spite of the loss of the sight of one eye in boyhood, and the weakness of the other, young Houghton trained as a painter at Leigh's Academy in London, and shortly afterward, while still in his twenties, achieved a reputation as a leading illustrator of ornate table-books and literary magazines. He derived much of his style and many of his ideas from the then-influential Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhod and contributed heady images of Arthurian swains commuting on horseback to court swooning maidens. His illustrations for the Dalziel editions of *Arabian Nights* and *Don Quixote* are among the classics of Victorian book illustration. How did such an artist come to make drawings of the violent, lusty young West?

Aiming for an honesty and simplicity neglected in the decorous and stylistic art of Neo-Classicism (particularly of the arch-villain Raphael), the Pre-Raphaelites often turned to the methods and subjects of medieval art. But being a part of late Romanticism, they were understandably attracted, as well, to the natural, unspoiled frontier and "noble savage" of the American West. Like most European artists, the Pre-Raphaelites must have seen the Indian gallery of the American artist George Catlin



Utes on the march—probably drawn from a Pullman car window on the Union Pacific between Ogalala and Scotts Bluff.

during his many years in England or have pored over his albums and travelogues (first published in London); and certainly they had read the best-selling novels of James Fenimore Cooper. Moreover, the majority of the Pre-Raphaelites were liberals or Christian Socialists, whose pro-American sentiments had been strengthened by their Union sympathies during the Civil War. It is not surprising then, that Houghton accepted the challenge of recording America for the pages of the liberal *Graphic*.

He left Liverpool in early October, 1869, on the Inman sail-steamship, *City of Brussels*. The trip to the shores of America—ten to twelve days—tried his physical stamina as well as his imagination. Reflecting on the long sea trip, the artist remembered Dr. Sam Johnson's definition of a ship as "a prison with the chance of being drowned." Nevertheless, he was in high spirits, and from the very start his reports displayed a sense of relief from the everyday. Observing the joys and sorrows of transatlantic travel, he noted the strange, wailing ditties of the sailors as they spread sail, the indefatigable, peripatetic energy of the habitual tourist, and the grave courage of immigrants huddled together in the steerage. "Theirs is, for the time, a hard lot," he wrote. "They must make many sacrifices to reach the promised land of plentiful work and high wages."

The *City of Brussels* disembarked its long-suffering passengers in New York Harbor on October 24. Houghton spent the rest of October, November, and much of December drawing in the East. New York was in the full flush of the boom that followed the end of the Civil War. Broadway belles and bewhiskered Irish cops, crowded streets and ornate bars, trotting races and Tammany torchlight parades—all absorbed his unusual talent for making the unnoticed significant. He went on to Boston, making some memorable images of an old-fashioned snowy winter with streets full of hurrying citizens and horse-drawn sleds. But he was already making plans to go west. A note in the Boston weekly, *Every Saturday*, tells us that he proposed to cross the continent by the Union Pacific Railroad, visit the Mormons and the Shakers, and depict the manners and customs of California before returning east via the southern states. He did cross the continent to draw the Mormons, visited Shakers at Mount Lebanon, and depicted life in Chicago, and on the western frontier. More than likely, however, the gregarious Englishman soon discovered that these places, on the way to and in the West—not to mention his experiences with Buffalo Bill Cody—yielded much more material than he could possibly have anticipated. Perhaps for this reason, his western scenes are mainly confined to a Pawnee agency, a buffalo-hunting expedition, and a visit to the Mormons—all subjects easily accessible from the newly-opened Union Pacific Railroad. No California drawings appeared in the *Graphic*, although some may well have been submitted.

Houghton was clearly stimulated by these sights and subjects, totally different from anything seen in Europe, and he sent a great amount of work back to England. A total of seventy-two published illustrations, thirty-four of which are western subjects, were engraved after his drawings. In most instances, they were accompanied by articles or short texts edited from the artist's own descriptive notes; for there was plenty of time to write as well as draw during the long journeys by river and railroad.

Houghton took the train from New York to Buffalo, then continued to Cincinnati via Pittsburgh. "Our

A Pawnee camp in midwinter.

artist," the *Graphic* noted, "is off toward the setting sun. We shall now get beyond the thickly-settled cities and country of the Atlantic coast, the thickly-studded eastern and central states; we shall see no more the community of the staid descendants of staidest old Puritan refugees, nor fever-stricken children of Gotham casting their lives away in the pursuit of gold, nor burry-tongued Pennsylvanians with their mush and their Quaker neighbors, and their unpronounceable but exceedingly enviable Dutch patronymics. We are to follow in the unending trail which, for these many years, the vast multitude of emigrants—Irish, German, English, and Swede—have followed in search of new homes and the good fortune promised by a virgin land."

Houghton's fine romantic image of the American Indian as a noble savage unsullied by the vices of the white man underwent considerable revision on contact. Not only had the Indian taken to the white man's liquor ("Whatever Indian by any odd chance gets involved in a city or village of whites is almost certain to be the champion drunkard of the place"), Houghton found him to be inordinately fond of gambling as well. Above, the artist depicts himself observing a group of Pawnees deeply engrossed in a game of chance, and while the Indians quickly picked up such favorite games of the white man as Seven-up, Whist, and Euchre, there was no doubt that this particular vice was a venerable part of their traditions.

As the train puffed through northern Virginia, the artist was moved to inform his readers of the comfort of the transcontinental trains. "The modern American train," he wrote, "is a perambulating first-class hotel whizzed by steam across a continent."

Cincinnati came into view, and was described as a "bright, go-ahead, busy place; its business quarter down near the broad river, its residences back on the hills, and its vineyards and orchards smiling in the fresh awakening spring." Here, he boarded a river steamer for the trip to St. Louis, where, before continuing his journey by rail to Chicago, he stopped to collect the necessary papers from General Sherman enabling him to visit and stay in army posts and Indian reservations. He does not appear to have remained long in the Windy City, and after a short side trip to the great pine forests of Upper Michigan for a turkey shoot, boarded the train for Omaha.

When Houghton arrived in Omaha, it was late January, and the ground was thickly covered with snow. From inside his Pullman car, the artist made a sketch of children sledding in the snow in a skating park, and wrote that "the children have a dashing, vigorous, and lusty look which betrays them as the children of the lusty far-western people." West of Omaha, Houghton stopped off at Silver Creek or Clarksville and reported to the nearby army camp at North Loup (later Fort Hartsoff) to arrange for a visit to the Pawnee reservation, then located in a fork of the Loup River near Genoa, Nebraska. The Pawnees had provided a large number of scouts for the cavalry regiments stationed in the region, and in turn received protection from attack by their old enemies, the hostile Sioux. The Indian agent, Jacob M. Troth, probably acted as guide, for his name and address are noted in the artist's sketchbook.

Several days at the agency provided Houghton with subjects for some of his best illustrations of frontier life, notably, *Bartering with Indians, A Smoke with the Friendlies,* and *Pawnee Squaws.* These, together with a group of smaller drawings, formed a unique, if sad, report on the last phase of Pawnee tribal life in and around their permanent villages of ancient earth lodges in eastern Nebraska.

Circulating in the village, the English artist soon discovered that his Pre-Raphaelite image of the noble and uncorrupted savage was completely outdated and had been replaced by the "commonplace reality of these modern days." He found that the Pawnees loved to gamble either inside their lodges or outside on the prairie, and that their favorite games, like those of most western cardplayers, were seven-up, high, low, jack, whist, and euchre. He also found they liked to get drunk on "fire-water," although he thought it very likely that the Indians derived their first experience with the beverage from the pleasure-loving Cavalier colony of Virginia or the Catholic one of Maryland.

Houghton did, however, find something of the uncorrupted savage as he watched a group of Indian boys at play, writing that "The Indian mother loves her boy, but she is not tender with him. From his earliest years he is . . . forced to take long journeys over craggy mountains, through boundless forests, and across dreary prairies, either jolted and shaken in the stiff basket at his mother's back, or when old enough, trudging by his warrior father's side. . . . While the white boy is crouched over his Latin Grammar, his mental arithmetic, and his *History of the American Indian,* the copper-coloured boy has already caught the infectious excitement of the chase, and has learned to plunge deep into the forests, among howling wild beasts and dangerous solitudes.

As Houghton traveled further into the great open land of sky and tall grass, he wondered at the grandeur of the West. "After all that is written," he said, "it is hard for any reader who has constantly lived amid a thickly-settled civilization to conceive of the sights and scenes of the wilderness in western America. The magnitude of its objects baffles the would-be delineator at the outset. Who can bring before us, either on canvas or in words, the effect of those prairies in which, although flat for miles and miles, men get lost, and die of starvation — whose wavy monotony is only broken by the wide and perfect circle of the horizon; of whose mountain ranges and those deep-down valleys which the world-wide traveller tells us are hardly matched in magnitude and grandeur by the Himalayas themselves."

Although the artist found the great silence of forest and mountain beautiful and sublime, he noted that the "vividly brilliant Western sky could become an unpitying and mocking firmament" unless you occasionally received the "rare and living message," and went on to add, "let the adventurous Cockney who thinks he would like 'that sort of thing' — meaning an extended residence in log huts, on solitary ridges, amid countless forests, and who has his daily newspaper with his coffee

three hundred-odd days a year, imagine a Daily [newspaper] coming but monthly, and then coming months after the date. Wars and rumors of wars have come and gone, ministries been overturned, the last aristocratic scandal been aired and forgotten, friends have been burned out, and our own valets have come into fortunes, but we know not of it, and mayhap, never shall."

HOUGHTON PENETRATED DEEPER STILL into the Great Plains, along the Union Pacific to North Platte, Nebraska. Sullivan quoted the artist's younger daughter, Mrs. A. B. Davis, as saying that her father met Buffalo Bill Cody, then in his active hunting days, and that it was he who took Houghton on a buffalo-hunting expedition. Out of this excursion came some of the finest and most interesting illustrations of the entire series

The favored locale of these hunting parties was the tall grass country between the Platte and Republican rivers, which abounded with game, particularly buffalo. Usually under the patronage of the Army, the parties started out from Fort McPherson. Special Order No. 19, dated February 15, 1870, issued by headquarters at the fort, authorized Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Campbell Dallas Emory, Captain of the Ninth Infantry, to command a mixed unit of the Ninth and the Fifth Cavalry on a hunting expedition. Besides Houghton and Cody, the party included Brevet Major W. H. Brown, who first introduced Cody to Ned Buntline and subsequently became a character himself in a dime novel.

For the sophisticated Houghton, the buffalo hunt was a completely new experience. Alternately enthusi-

Salt Lake City marked the end of Houghton's western adventures. Here, he spent most of one Sunday in the Great Tabernacle, where he enjoyed the rumblings of the huge organ and a sermon by Brigham Young himself.

astic and philosophical at the prospect of being involved as participant as well as observer, he exclaimed:

"Off to the plains! It is nothing less than inspiring—this thought of leaving civilization all behind, to become a much-discovering Columbus among the new and likely enough hitherto untrodden wilds. You half canonize yourself as a hero as you start out on a genuine buffalo hunt. The sport is Titanic—meat for gods and savages. How puny seem the home sports that your friends are indulging in with such zest 'in the north of Scotland.' You're fain to chuckle that henceforth you will take rank with the whilom denizens of India who have returned to relate glowing tales of hair-breadth 'scapes by flood and field, in tiger jungles and the haunts of elephants; and that they will not alone win, unchallenged, the breathless admiration and sweet plaudits of the Desdemonas of West-End drawing-rooms.

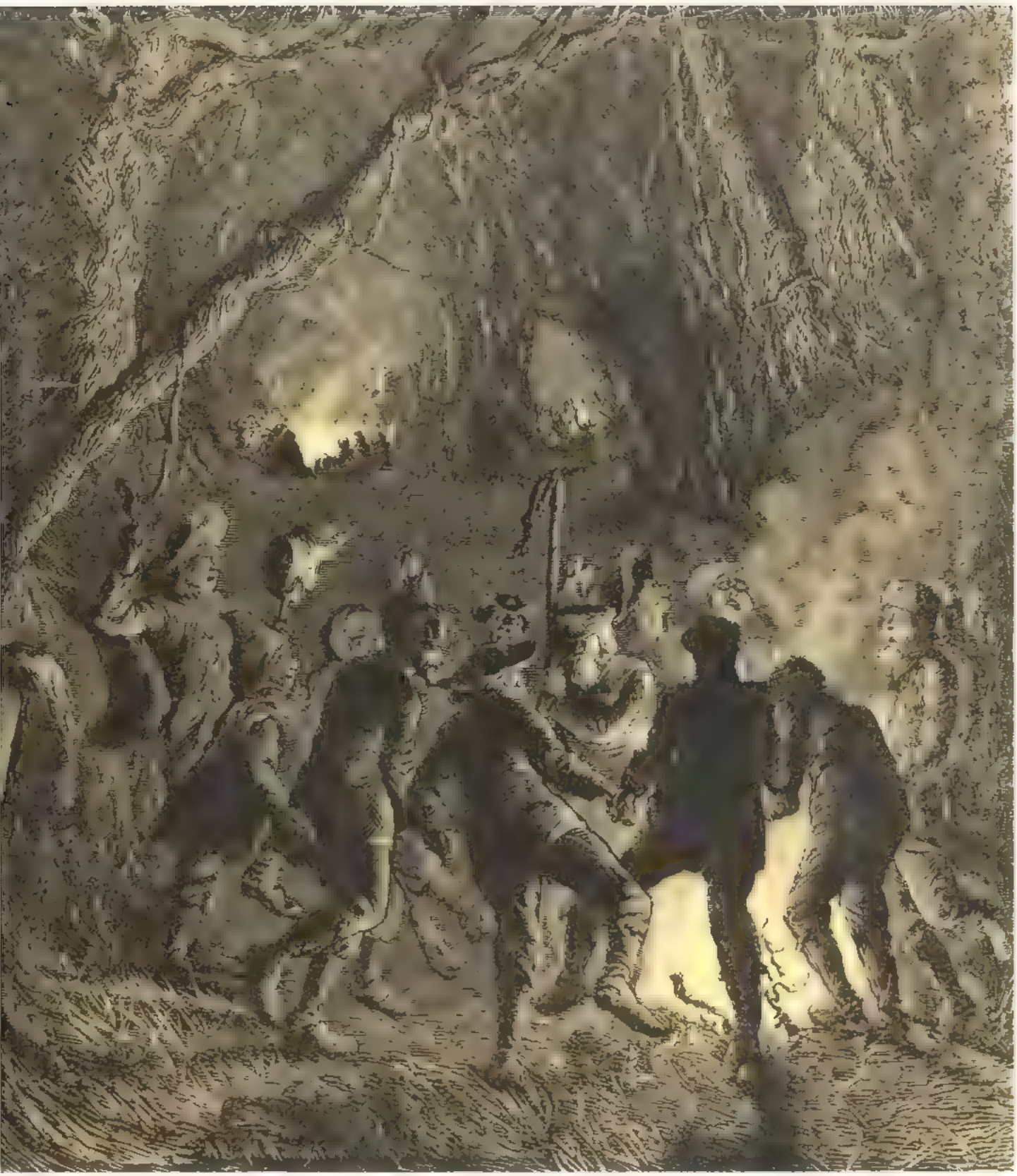
After journeying up and over the rolling sandhill country southwest of Fort McPherson—where all hands had to turn out to help the wagons across gullies and canyons—the party entered the pleasant undulating land of the tablelands and camped on Red Willow Creek in present Hayes County. The following morning, all members mounted and rendezvoused at the starting point of the hunt. It was not long before they spotted their first buffalo standing on the crest of a hill. Houghton was thoroughly impressed by the sight:

"There stands the monster, stock still, gazing at them with the strong, majestic gaze of his tribe. He is the forerunner, outpost, picket of his particular herd, browsing and keeping guard on the frontier of their domain. A great, tough-ribbed, hard and hairy-headed and bearded bull, he is one of that outer circle of buffalo which is always found among the cows and the young. He watches for two enemies—for the white, or Kiota wolf, a cruel rapacious beast, which stealthily pounces upon their young, their feeble or their wounded; and for man, in the shape of Indians, who vie with the Kiota in their cunning and their greed. For while the white man attacks the buffalo face to face in the open day, the red man resorts to stratagem to entrap his prey. He poisons his arrows and conceals them in his breast; he envelopes himself in the Kiota's skin, and imitating the sneaking movements of the wolf, will follow and hang about a herd, often for miles. . . . The Indian is tigerlike in his ferocity when hunting the buffalo; his eyes gleam, his mouth foams, and his hideously painted countenance flows with the heat of his passion. Our party of whites, however, use their rifles, and when in close quarters, their knives and spears."

After a successful buffalo hunt, the party relaxed voluptuously, talking over the conquests of the day, disputing—with good-natured profanity—who had made the most effective shot and brought down for good and all the day's kill. "Mostly, however," Houghton wrote, "the talk is generous and jolly, in the general good humor inspired by success, and aided, no doubt, by the whiskey and tobacco, long untouched, but which is now passed round without stint."
On the return from the hunt, the party made camp in the cottonwoods along the Platte River, where they indulged in a more jubilant celebration—a "jamboree" of monumental proportions, in which Houghton became involved in a drinking bout with a friendly Indian chief. According to Houghton's daughter, "Houghton and the chief were running even when the supply of whiskey unexpectedly gave out. The contest was then continued with brandy, glass by glass; Houghton was finally judged winner on points, as the chief had to retire on the verge of bursting."

The white buffalo hunters were themselves "Indianlike in their thin, high-cheeked, bony swarthy, long-haired, hard-featured physiognomies, as if a contrast with the Indians, and participation in their mode of life, had twisted them into a personal likeness. They are energetic, and matter-of-fact, cool and daring; not select in language, but given, in a certain sense, to frequent cursory remarks, not mindful of the proprieties, but striding before you, and helping themselves first at table—a barrel top; yet free-hearted and good-tempered, and keenly zealous in sport."

The expedition had been away for almost a week and had covered almost a hundred miles by the time the hunters returned to make camp among the cottonwoods along the Platte River close to Fort McPherson. Here a "jamboree" took place that involved Houghton in a drinking bout with an unnamed friendly Indian chief. There must have been many such incidents. The famous



Cody himself told of taking part in a horse-race for the amusement of the party that included Houghton.

The hunting party returned to Fort McPherson on February 23, and shortly afterward Houghton reluctantly took leave of his "hearty, genial, free-spoken" friends. At North Platte, he boarded a train that would carry him to the final stage of his travels in the West, Salt Lake City. The train stopped at various towns and settlements en route, and he made sketches for several additional illustrations.

In Salt Lake City, Houghton stayed at the Walker House Hotel. He found the American Turks to be big raw-boned men, with goat-tufts on their chins, with two or three—some very sorrowful and haggard-looking—women on hand. He spent most of a Sunday in the Great Tabernacle, where he listened to the immense organ and a sermon by Brigham Young. From this experience he produced the masterly double page illustration, *Service in a Mormon Tabernacle.*

Houghton's visit to the Mormon capital concluded his stay in the West; he probably returned to England in the early summer of 1870. Almost immediately the *Graphic* sent him to cover the Franco-Prussian War and its aftermath, the Paris Commune. His short life, however, was approaching its end. Houghton was greatly attached to his family, and the unexpected death of his wife within a few days of giving birth to their third child was a terrible loss, and the artist took to excessive drinking. He finally died of cirrhosis at his home in Hampstead, London, on November 25, 1875. The London "pea-soup" fogs that prevail in that month must have made him think of the wide clear skies of the Great Plains and his carefree days with Buffalo Bill Cody.

Strange as it may seem today, contemporary American reaction to "Graphic America" was highly unfavorable. "Americans," read Houghton's obituary notice in the London *Daily Telegraph* (December 1, 1875), "were apt to insist that Mr. Houghton exaggerated all he saw; and angrily refused to accept his fantas-

Above and lower left: working drawings from Houghton's American sketchbook.

tic group of Broadway belles and his weird torchlight processions and mass meetings as truthful transcripts of American manners." To the somewhat complacent eastern readers of the *Graphic*, Houghton was hardly a usual visitor. He took little interest in polite society; much to the displeasure of those who saw themselves as representative of a self-conscious culture and refinement, he invariably portrayed the unconventional side of life. *Galaxy*, a New York monthly (April, 1870), was particularly indignant over his portrayal of the New York police: "The Broadway squad is a fine body of men, well knit, athletic, and of admirable carriage. Mr. Houghton's sketch makes them a set of husky, ill-made travesties on the human form." *Harper's Weekly* (February 3, 1872), after pirating most of the New York and Boston illustrations, criticized the English artist for "seeing what was not observable to ordinary eyes in the manners and customs of America."

The western series did not get such an unfavorable reception — possibly because the western scenes were as much a novelty in New York and Boston as they were in London. *Harper's Weekly* termed them "effective and truthful because his prejudices were not involved." The editors of the *Graphic*, however, had had enough; and the western drawings — the best of the whole series of this sophisticated Englishman, who found the convivial and uninhibited frontier to his taste — did not receive the space and editorial attention they so obviously deserved □

Paul Hogarth, *an English painter and illustrator, has traveled widely in the United States since 1962. In that year and in 1963 he made extended visits to New York to make illustrations for* Brendan Behan's New York *(1964). He is a Tutor of Drawing at the Royal College of Art, London, and author of* Artist as Reporter *(1967), a historical study of the creative artist's involvement with journalism.*

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

Many of Houghton's American illustrations, including the western series, appeared in the Boston *Every Saturday*, as well as in *Harper's Weekly*. The former journal arranged with the *Graphic* to send electrotypes of the illustrations so that they often appeared simultaneously, if not before they did in England. *Harper's Weekly*, after pirating the series, made the same arrangement.

My account of Houghton's travels in the West derives from several sources in England and the United States. Primarily, it is based on his own fulsomely descriptive notes accompanying the illustrations (*Graphic*, Vols. I-IV, 1870–73). These are often prosy in style and only occasionally refer to places and individuals. Notes and addresses found in the artist's sketchbook in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, provided a few clues; and I was able to identify some of the actual locales of the illustrations when I followed Houghton's itinerary from Omaha to Cheyenne in 1965. A search in the National Archives, Washington, D. C., revealed the special order authorizing the buffalo-hunting expedition. I have not, however, succeeded in discovering the identities of the other members of the party, although these may have included Mr. Flynn, the British sportsman, and very probably, Cody's sister, Helen Cody Wetmore, and Dr. Frank Powell, then a journalist.

Additional references to the artist's adventures appear in Edward J. Sullivan's informative tribute, "An Artist's Artist," *Print Collector's Quarterly* (Vol. X, 1923).

More data on Houghton's life, work, and ideas, as well as a critical appraisal of "Graphic America," was found in "A Forgotten Book-Illustrator," by Laurence Housman, *Bibliographica* (London, Vol. I, 1895); and the same author's monograph, *Arthur Boyd Houghton* (London, 1896); the Dalziels' autobiography, *The Brothers Dalziel: A Record of Work: 1840–90* (London, 1901), also contained useful information, as did Forrest Reid's definitive study of Victorian book illustration, *Illustrators of the Sixties* (London, 1928).

A centennial exhibition of the illustrations of Winslow Homer and Arthur Boyd Houghton took place at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1936 (both were born in 1836). I therefore read with interest the American views of "Graphic America," in the following articles: "Arthur Boyd Houghton and his American drawings," by Sinclair Hamilton, *Colophon* (Vol. I, No. 2, 1939); and "Winslow Homer and Arthur Boyd Houghton" by Alice Newlin, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Vol. XXXI, 1936).

Van Gogh's references to Houghton and his American drawings were found in *Letters to an Artist: from Vincent Van Gogh to Anton Ridder Van Rappard, 1881–85* (London 1936); and in the *Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, Vols. I and III (London, 1958).

Finally, I would like to pass along special thanks to Graham Reynolds and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for permission to reproduce various sketches from Houghton's sketchbook.

POVERTY, AFFLUENCE, and CULTURE

BY PETER FARB

Steps in the evolution of society as seen in the Shoshone bands of the Great Basin and the tribal chiefdoms of the Northwest Coast

While systematically annihilating the civilization of the North American Indian, the white man has been fascinated by him to the point of obsession, devoting a remarkable amount of time and effort to an understanding of his victim. This fascination has led to any number of fabulous theories calculated to explain the Indian's way of life, from romantic constructs that regarded him as the only example of the truly uncorrupted man to those that saw him as a kind of degenerate human, a living link between man and the apes. Some, however, recognized in the extreme diversity of life-styles apparent in the Indian societies of the continent an outline of human civilization, a microcosm that might reveal the historical processes by which mankind developed from the stone age to the age of technology. This theory, called cultural evolution, has been unfashionable in anthropological circles for more than seventy-five years, but today has re-emerged in greatly refined form.

Probably the most comprehensive and intriguing application of the theory of cultural evolution in recent years is Peter Farb's recent book, *Man's Rise to Civilization as Shown by the Indians of North America from Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State*, published a few days ago by E. P. Dutton. It is Farb's contention, supported by a series of essays comparing and contrasting Indian societies from the Eskimo of the Arctic to the Aztec of Mexico, that human societies show an evolutionary spectrum from the simple extended family to the complex state. The Indians of North America, with their monumental diversity of cultures and levels of development, provide Farb with a fascinating case history for the discussion of man's attempt to live with himself and his fellows, a study not without implications for our own times.

In the following article adapted from his book, Farb compares simple familial band societies of the Shoshone people of the Great Basin and the complex chiefdoms of the Northwest Coast, a comparison that illustrates the cultural devices by which widely divergent human societies erect the mechanics of a civilization suited to their time and place.

I. A CULTURE OF SCARCITY

Speaking about the "Digger Indians" of the Great Basin, the explorer Jedediah Smith opined in 1827 that they were "the most miserable objects in creation." Mark Twain, riding the overland stage west of Salt Lake in 1861, reported that he "came across the wretchedest type of mankind I have ever seen up to this writing." He went on to describe the Gosiute, one of those groups commonly called Diggers, who "produce nothing at all, and have no villages, and no gatherings together into strictly defined tribal communities—a people whose only shelter is a rag cast on a bush to keep off a portion of the snow, and yet who inhabit one of the most rocky, wintry, repulsive wastes that our country or any other can exhibit."

From the moment that the first explorers encountered them, there was no doubt that the Shoshonean-speaking Indians, who inhabited one of the driest and least hospitable areas on the continent, led a miserable existence. Their most elaborate tool was a digging stick with which they pried roots out of the ground. They made simple nets to snare rabbits and birds. And the whites watched with disgust as the Digger Indians devoured grasshoppers and lizards. Their clothing was sparse: The men wore a breechcloth; the women, a double apron woven from plant fibers. An early historian, Hubert Howe Bancroft, even put forward the idea that they hibernated: "Lying in a state of semi-torpor in holes in the ground during the winter, and in spring crawling forth and eating grass on their hands and knees, until able to regain their feet; having no clothes, scarcely any cooked food, in many instances no weapons, with merely a few vague imaginings for religion, living in the utmost squalor and filth, putting no bridle on their passions, there is surely room for no missing link between them and the brutes."

To the whites, here were people who lived at the lowliest state of humankind, no better than the apes. And here, it was thought by some, would be found the earliest customs of mankind surviving into the present. Others thought that the Shoshone might be, if not the missing link, then some sort of transition between the societies of apes and men. The researches of anthropologists have left all such thoughts unsupported. Neither the Great Basin Shoshone nor any other group of primitive peoples has ever revealed itself as a society that knows no laws, that consists of unfettered humans free to do what they want when they want. Instead, the Great Basin Shoshone are circumscribed by customs, rules of behavior, and rituals that in comparison make the Court of Versailles or the Kremlin appear unusually permissive.

The cultural impoverishment of the Diggers (who hereafter will be called the Shoshone; they include various Ute, Paiute, Shoshoni, and Gosiute bands) is explained by two factors, one not very important and the other vital. The unimportant one is that the Shoshone inhabited one of the bleakest places on earth, a stern environment that afforded only limited opportunities. The Great Basin is a land of dry soil, high evaporation, low rainfall. Native plants that can resist drought, such as greasewood and sagebrush, are of little value to humans. Native plants bearing edible seeds or roots do occur in abundance around streams, but streams are few and far between.

Much more important than the environment in explaining Shoshone impoverishment is that the Shoshone lacked a technology that allowed them to rise above these limitations. The soil and the climate around Salt Lake City today are no different from what they were in aboriginal times; only the cultures have changed. Yet today Utah is inhabited by many wealthy white farmers who produce not only an adequate supply of food for themselves, but even a huge surplus that is exported to other places. The technology of modern whites has allowed them to nullify the environmental limitations.

How poorly equipped the Shoshone were to cope with this environment can be seen from the number of their cultural elements (the tools, weapons, beliefs, and practices of a society), which totaled about three thousand. In comparison, the United States armed forces invading North Africa during World War II unloaded five hundred thousand elements of material culture alone. No one could hazard a guess as to the large number of cultural elements possessed by a wealthy white farmer near Salt Lake City today, to say nothing of the enormous number of elements of Modern America, which surely would run to many millions.

But take caution not to misinterpret this comparison between the impoverished Red man and the technological white. No claim for the superiority in intelligence of one race over another has ever withstood scientific scrutiny. At various times Shoshone geniuses must have invented permanent shelters. But the Shoshone populace always rejected living in houses because their local food supply was precarious, and the family continually had to abandon its shelter and move on to new foraging territory. The white settlers should not have condemned the Shoshone for living under mere piles of brush, they should have applauded the Shoshone for having had the intelligence not to be tempted by anything so ostentatious, yet so useless for their culture, as a house.

Because of the simplicity of their culture and the limitations imposed by the environment, the Great Basin Shoshone over much of their range lived at the density of one person to fifty square miles, and in some places only one every hundred miles. No more than a few families could remain together for any length of time; there simply was not enough food to go around. A few families might come together for cooperative hunts or live in small winter settlements, but they soon dispersed to their individual hunting grounds. It is no wonder, then, that the Shoshone existed at the simplest level of human organization known, the irreducible minimum of the family.

No human organization can be simpler than the family, which is a stable association of a man, a woman, and their children. It is as basic as is possible to get in interpersonal relations, but simple as it is, the family is the foundation upon which larger bands and more complex social organizations have been built. That is because of the several relationships involving the female: A married female is in conjugal relationship with her husband, in biological relationship with her children, and in social relationship with the family into which she was born and which she left to get married.

An isolated human in a primitive society is usually a dead human, and that is why unmarried or widowed relatives always attach themselves to some family. A Shoshone family was a self-sufficient unit that carried out all the economic activities from production to consumption. There was division of labor: Women gathered plant food, made baskets, prepared meals; men hunted, not only for meat but also for hides and furs needed for winter clothing. The male head of the Shoshone family was its entire political organization and its whole legal system. The family offered almost all that the Shoshone needed, which is not to say that this is what the Shoshone wanted. His lot would have been much easier were he able to exist in larger social units. As a matter of fact, the nuclear family probably never existed outside of theory, for a tendency was constantly at work to unite several families into

Abundance and the chiefdomship permitted Northwest Coast Indians a class of artists. Above, a shaman's bone tube, used to blow away sickness. (Peabody Museum)

a higher level of social integration, a loose band. That was done by marriage alliances. As families wandered about seeking rabbits or seeds ripe enough for harvest, they occasionally came into contact with other families. Most usually these families were ones into which their relatives had married or which were potential providers of spouses for their children.

Relatives are important in a primitive society such as that of the Shoshone. It is pleasant to see them a few times a year, to sit around the campfire with them, and swap stories; they also can be counted upon to avenge wrongs and to share food in times of acute shortage. The importance of relatives also helps us to understand the reason for prohibitions against incest, for incest represents a threat to the entire band because it prevents alliances gained through marrying-out. The more primitive the group is, the more of a threat it is, which explains why the concept of incest is most sharply defined and violations most drastically punished among the very primitive groups

Much has been written about the precariousness of the Shoshone food supply. Indeed, the occurrence of both their plant and animal food was unpredictable from year to year because of the variations in rainfall. A particular area might be wet one year—allowing plants to grow, which in turn nourished animal prey—but be dry and sparse for several years thereafter. Almost no localities provided a dependable food supply, and so the Shoshone families spent a good deal of time moving about from place to place

Most people assume that the members of the Shoshone band worked ceaselessly in an unremitting search for sustenance. Such a dramatic picture might appear confirmed by an erroneous theory almost everyone recalls from schooldays: A high culture emerges only when the people have the leisure to build pyramids or to create art. The fact is that high civilization is hectic and that primitive hunters and collectors of wild food, like the Shoshone, are among the most leisured people on earth

The Shoshone had nothing but time on their hands, which is what made them appear unusually lazy to white settlers. Their leisure is explained not by laziness but by an absence of technology to store and preserve food. They might cache some seeds or nuts for the winter, but a bonanza in rabbits did them no good because they did not know of any way to preserve the meat. Once a Shoshone caught a fish he had to consume it immediately before it spoiled, because he had never learned to dry and smoke it. He had no way to cope with a surplus. There were times of the year when the Shoshone were surrounded by an incredible abundance of game animals, but they derived no benefits from it. Even though pronghorn antelopes might suddenly become abundant, the Shoshone ceased further hunting until they consumed what they had already killed.

Even when their food supply was nearly exhausted the Shoshone still did not work very hard. Since they consumed a wide variety of foods, they had the choice of going after whatever was most readily available at the time. If the fish were migrating upstream, then they merely went out and harvested that resource. If not, then they probably knew some place where a supply of seeds was ripening. They might have to trudge many miles for their supply, but there was nothing haphazard about the undertaking; they knew exactly what was available and in which direction it lay.

The tendency was always present among the Shoshone for several families to unite and to form a more complex order of social organization, a band. An important unifier was the cooperation necessary for a rabbit or a pronghorn antelope hunt. Four elements were essential before a cooperative hunt could be organized: a large supply of game, several families (preferably related), nets, and a leader. If just one of the elements was lacking, then the hunt could not be held. But when all elements were present, the cooperative hunt yielded more game than the same individuals could kill acting separately.

Although several families cooperated closely during the hunt, there were good reasons why such cooperation established only temporary bonds. Neither the time nor the place for the next cooperative hunt could be foretold; it was held when the game was abundant enough to make the hunt worth the effort and when families, nets, and a rabbit boss all came together at the same place and time. No one could anticipate which families would happen to be near each other when all essentials for a hunt were present.

In some areas of the Great Basin a more reliable food supply permitted several Shoshone families to remain and continue to cooperate. In these areas, both the larger population and the need to maintain peaceful relations with non-Shoshone neighbors created a role for leadership. The first white explorers to arrive in these parts of Nevada were delighted to find leaders with whom they could make treaties. The leader of a Shoshone band, however, possessed nothing like the political power of a chief. Agreements the Shoshone leaders made with whites in good faith were not kept by other Shoshone, because in band society no mechanism existed to enforce the leader's agreements.

Before the coming of the whites, the Shoshone, pitiful and impoverished as they were, had nevertheless achieved one of the noblest aspirations of civilized man. They did not engage in warfare. The explanation lies not in some superior Shoshone ethic or in their being Noble Red Men, but in more practical matters. The Shoshone did not wage war because they had no reason to. They had no desire to gain military honors, for these were meaningless in their kind of society. They had no territories to defend, for a territory is valuable only at those times when it is producing food, and those were precisely the times when the Shoshone cooperated, rather than made war. Even if they had wanted to steal from richer neighboring Indians, they lacked both the weapons and a society sufficiently complex to be organized for concerted action. Whenever other Indians invaded their lands and attacked them, the Shoshone did not fight back but simply ran away and hid.

But when that new culture element introduced by whites, the horse, spread northward from New Mexico into Shoshone lands, it was greeted in various ways, depending upon the degree of im-

poverishment of the different Shoshone groups. The horse made evident the subtle cultural differences between the slightly wealthier Shoshone and their poorer relatives. The Shoshone living at the lowest subsistence level in the arid portions of the Great Basin found no value at all in horses. In fact, horses consumed the very plants upon which these Shoshone fed.

Farther north there was more grass—and, more important, bison herds. There, too, Shoshone families had already developed more permanent ways of cooperating than the occasional rabbit drives. The coming of the horse was the catalyst that enabled families to unite into predatory bands of mounted horsemen. The Ute, for example, obtained some horses by about 1820, and almost immediately they began raiding neighboring Indians, later attacking Mormons and other white settlers in their lands. The mounted Ute even made it a practice to raid their Shoshone relatives of Nevada in the early spring, when they were weak after a winter of hunger; the Ute then fattened them for sale as slaves to the Spaniards in Santa Fe.

For more than ten thousand years the Shoshone and their ancestors had scratched out much the same sort of precarious living. Then for perhaps fifty years some of them became the temporary lords of an immense region between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Cascade ranges. By 1870, though, their burst of splendor had been extinguished. They had been defeated by other Indians and finally by the United States Army. Their lands were quickly filling up with white settlers, and in 1872 Major John Wesley Powell, explorer of Grand Canyon and founder of the Bureau of American Ethnology, described the effects: "Their hunting grounds have been spoiled, their favorite valleys are occupied by white men, and they are compelled to scatter in small bands to obtain subsistence. . . . They are in an exceedingly demoralized state: they prowl about the mining camps, begging and pilfering, the women prostituting themselves to the lust of the lower class of men."

Shameful as the conditions of the Shoshone were—and to a great extent still are—these people were spared the complete disruption experienced by other Indian groups that possessed more elaborate social organizations. The Shoshone had little to lose: They were united in no complex fabric of culture, meticulously woven strand by strand, to be ripped apart suddenly by the invasion of whites. As white families settled the lands that had once been theirs, the Shoshone went on as they had before, except that they attached themselves to white families instead of to Indian ones. Few Shoshone had ever known anything beyond an intolerably low standard of living, so they easily made do with the low wages the whites paid for their occasional labor. When they were forced to move about, either to find work or to be herded onto reservations, they did not suffer the extreme anguish many other Indian groups did under similar conditions; the Shoshone had never been tied to any particular localities in the past. There was little for the whites to disrupt—no bonds of community, no elaborate ceremonial societies, no complex political organization.

The Shoshone continued to maintain themselves as they always had, on the family level. All their family customs—kinship relations, child-rearing, belief in magic, and even games—continued as before. Their leaders easily switched over to a role not much different from organizing a cooperative rabbit drive: They negotiated for several cooperating families in dealings with whites. For all these reasons the Shoshone made a comparatively smooth transition to white society, surviving the wars, epidemics, famine, and humiliation that destroyed numerous other Indian societies. Relations between whites and Shoshone have been amiable, on the whole, and these Indians today do not seem to bear the deep-seated resentment toward whites that most other Indian groups do.

II. THE AFFLUENT SOCIETIES

Northwest Coast culture refers to the Indian groups of diverse languages and physical stocks inhabiting the narrow strip of land between the continent's westernmost mountains and the Pacific Ocean from eastern Alaska to northern California, a distance of some fifteen hundred miles. The subsistence pattern of all these Indians must technically be regarded as hunting-and-gathering; yet, because of a fortuitous combination of environmental factors, their food supply was more like the abundance reaped from intensive agriculture. So rich are the products of the sea and the land along this coast that the Indians "harvested" them much as agricultural Indians living on fertile soils harvested their fields.

Although the environment does not determine the kind of culture that will arise in any particular place, as I indicated when discussing the Shoshone, it nevertheless provides limitations and opportunities. The abundance of food on the Northwest Coast led to a population that was basically sedentary. The incredible yield of the seas, together with the discovery of ways to preserve fish by smoking and drying, resulted in the piling up of vast surpluses, which in turn gave rise to large populations, much larger than might be anticipated in a hunting economy not located in such a favorable environment. The Northwest Coast Indians might have developed any one of several different kinds of societies, but they handled this large population with its food surplus by developing elaborate institutions based largely on wealth, status, and rank.

A particular kind of social organization arose here—the chiefdom, which transcends the tribe in two important ways. A chiefdom usually has a more dense population, and the chiefdom is better integrated in its economic, social, and religious life. Chiefdoms arise most often in environments where an abundance

A Kwakiutl eagle mask represents the "human spirit" of the bird. (Denver Art Museum)

of food and materials is obtained from a variety of sources such as the sea, beaches, forests, rivers, mountains. A lowly band exploits this kind of environment by moving from place to place, first fishing the river, then going to the forest to pick berries, later moving up the slopes to hunt big game, and so on. But a chiefdom can exploit such an environment differently and much more efficiently. In the chiefdom, the people do not move around. One group lives most of the time near the river, and fishes; another group resides in the forest and specializes in hunting game; a third gathers plant food. Each group channels the food and raw materials to a central authority—the "chief"—who then redistributes them to all.

Two areas exist in North America where such environments prevail and where chiefdoms arose: the Northwest Coast and the Circum-Caribbean area (southeastern United States from Virginia to Texas, Central America south of Guatemala, the large islands of the West Indies, and Venezuela). In other parts of the world, chiefdoms were most abundant in the myriad islands of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia; among the steppe nomads of central Asia (including the Turkic and Mongol hordes of less than a thousand years ago); and in West Africa among the Ashanti, Benin, and Dahomey—before whites taught them to become slavers.

Other places in North America also were blessed with an environment with the potentiality to yield a surplus, yet their hunters and gatherers, like the Shoshone, remained at the band or tribal level and never reached the level of the chiefdom. These people were unable to create a surplus because they never learned to preserve and to store food, and so there was no need for a central authority to redistribute goods. The Plains tribes were surrounded by the summer abundance of bison, but all they ever learned to do was to save some meat as jerkee or pemmican. For the rest of the year they were mostly at the mercy of the environment, living off their meager supplies and hoping to find stray bison during the winter. Lack of a technology of food storage places severe limits on how complex a society can become culturally, for the society has no way to sustain its social, economic, and political links during the long periods of scarcity. The Northwest Coast people, on the other hand, were remarkably efficient in developing a technology of food preservation

The chief was basically the group's economist. It was his responsibility to lay aside sufficient supplies of food and raw materials and to distribute them as needed. But he was also every bit as much a figurehead for his people as is the monarch of England today. The Tsimshian who lived on the coast opposite the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia were bound together by loyalty to their chief and by participation in his activities. They took extravagant care of him from the cradle to the grave. They built his grandiose house, saw that he did no manual work, and financed his elaborate feasts given to demonstrate his superiority over a neighboring chief; and when it was all over they buried him with much mourning If a member of another chiefdom even accidentally caused the slightest inconvenience to their chief, the Tsimshian rose as one to vengeance. Since the reputation of the Tsimshian among their neighbors depended upon the reputation of the chief himself, he could demand support and assistance in warfare.

The weakness inherent in the chiefdom was the chief's lack of legalized force to carry out his wishes. A modern American assumes that political decisions made by his government will be enforced by specialists with legally sanctioned police powers. The chief lacked any such monopoly of force. He was the central authority, but if his personality lost its charm, then he no longer could function as chief. Sometimes a strong chief successfully overruled opposition, but in most cases the chief realized that his powers were not as limitless as the horizon of the gray Pacific.

Once a man has been elevated to the position of chief, his whole lineage is at the same time elevated in rank and status. That is why, in the evolution of culture, rank appears for the first time at the level of the chiefdom; bands and tribes, on the other hand, are egalitarian. Every member of the chief's family becomes a little better than any member of any other family, a situation somewhat equivalent to Europe in the Middle Ages, where each new king created a new nobility of his family and descendants.

Once a society starts to keep track of who is who, there is no telling where genealogical bookkeeping will end. In Northwest Coast society it did not end until the very last and lowliest citizen knew his precise hereditary rank with a defined distance from the chief. There is a record of a Kwakiutl feast in which each of the 658 guests from thirteen subdivisions of the chiefdom knew whether he was, say, number 437 or number 438. In a chiefdom, particularly among the higher ranks, the game of genealogies assumes such importance that Polynesian chiefs, for example, are supposed to have been able to reel off their genealogies going back fifty generations.

In most chiefdoms around the world, the emphasis on rank and status has resulted in a class system of chiefs, nobles, and commoners. But the Northwest Coast lacked classes, for no two people belonged to preciely the same class—and even identical twins were ranked in the order of their birth. The only quality lay in every man's knowledge that he had a place in the rank order. Although no distinct class of nobles was set off against a class of commoners, some individuals were generally recognized as "high" and others as "low," but it was impossible to define exactly the line between them.

The whole question of ranking in the Northwest Coast became of crucial importance at the potlatches, those extravagant feasts at which gifts were distributed to every guest. Gifts had to be given out in some kind of order to avoid a chaotic scramble, and the most logical way was to give the most important man his gift first, then the next highest ranking individual was given a somewhat lesser share, and so on down the line until the lowliest citizen received his pittance. By the time all gifts had been distributed, each knew the exact number of his rank, he knew also that this number had been announced to everyone at the potlach, and that it would soon be known throughout the chiefdom

Each Northwest Coast Indian achieved his precise rank partly through birth and inheritance, partly through accident, and more rarely through social maneuvering. Opportunities for social mobility were few. Every parent wanted his child to marry someone of greater rank, so all these ambitions canceled each other out, and most marriages were between men and women of roughly equivalent rank. Inheritance and accident were much more important. Much as with European laws of primogeniture, the Northwest Coast Indians were reluctant to divide up inheritances. So a man usually passed on his estate intact to his eldest sister's eldest son if he belonged to the matrilineal Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, or Haisla—or to his own eldest son if he belonged to one of the patrilineal Northwest Coast societies.

If someone were the second son of the second sister of a chief among the Tlingit, his ranking was low and his prospects for advancement unpromising. But an accident might completely alter the situation. If a canoe carrying his aunt's sons, as well as his own

The creation of the professional artist might become a commodity for sale or trade—as in the case of this Haida carving of an Indian canoe manned by white sea lion hunters. (Smithsonian Institution)

older brother, were swept out to sea and lost, then he was suddenly elevated to first in the line of inheritance. He overnight became a prominent citizen, and the next potlatch would confirm him as, say, number 13 instead of his previous number 130. Once the whites arrived, the diseases they brought and the slaves they took suddenly left vacant many positions of rank which very lowly relatives filled at a single hurdle

Only one gap existed in the orderly ranking of Northwest Coast society: the division between free men and "slaves." The latter were not really part of the society; they were usually war captives from some other chiefdom, were not related to anyone with rank in the society, and had no rank of their own. Unlike the true slaves of western colonialism, they were not a productive part of the economy. The "slave" was more a trophy of war and a prestige item than a producer of economic wealth. There is no justification for calling the Northwest Coast cultures slave societies, and in the rest of this discussion these people will be referred to as "captives."

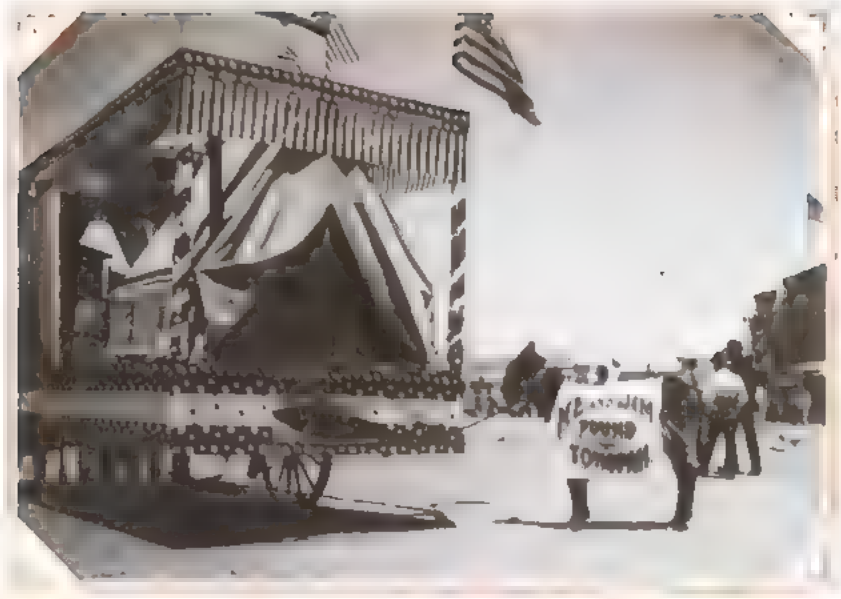
Some white apologists have claimed that it is in man's nature to enslave other men; as evidence they have pointed to the Northwest Coast Indians or to Africans who formerly put other Africans in chains. The truth is that slavery has never been proved to exist in any primitive society beneath the level of the state, except where the primitives learned slave making from a more complex culture. Primitive peoples in West Africa and in the Philippines were taught the slave trade by the Spaniards; they were responding to the economic incentives of Western civilization and not to those of their own cultures. The closest any American Indian society ever came to slavery was the "debt slavery" practiced in some parts of the Northwest Coast, particularly in California and Oregon. Debts might be incurred in a variety of ways, most commonly by gambling. A man rescued from drowning also owed a debt to his rescuer, and if he could not pay it then he became his rescuer's debt-slave until the obligation was worked off, or, as was more likely, his kinsmen ransomed him. In every case, the master owned only the slave's economic services and was not allowed to harm him physically in any way.

The Northwest Coast captive was an object of contempt, and he lacked any rights at all. Marriage was allowed only with other captives. A captive's only hope was to be ransomed by his kinsmen; usually his family made every effort to buy his return, although the stigma attached to having been a captive was so great that sometimes his relatives refused to ransom him because they did not want their family's shame back in their village

A Northwest Coast captive could be killed at the whim of his master. Among the Tlingit, for example, it was the custom to put the body of a captive in the bottom of the hole dug to secure the heavy post for a new house. This was not intended to "sanctify" or to "bless" the house in any way, but just to show that the builder was of such high rank he could not only put up a house, but he could also dispose of one of his assets. For similar purposes of gaining prestige, sometimes the bodies of dead captives were used as rollers over which a visiting chief could slide his canoe to beach it. However, captives were seldom put to death; an owner might just as easily free one as kill him, since in that way also the owner could show off his prestige.

Occupational specialization occurs to a minor degree in tribes and even on rare occasions in bands. A great leap forward occurs at the chiefdom level: Specialization becomes an integral part of the economic system, and it exists at every step from production through redistribution. The man who spends his time creating art needs berries, and the man who knows where to find berries usually does not know how to produce art; and both of them need fish from the sea and game from the forest.

(Continued on page 62)



RAILROAD DAYS

A Memoir of Tonopah, 1904

BY MRS. HUGH BROWN

"Trained," by her own account, "for nothing except how to be a lady," Mrs. Hugh Brown entered into the brawling, sometimes primitive frontier conditions of the mining town of Tonopah, Nevada, in 1904 with characteristic vigor—and remained there for the next twenty years. More than fifty years later, she set down her reminiscences of the Tonopah years in Lady in Boomtown, *published last month by* The American West. *In the following excerpt from her book, Mrs Brown recalls the jubilant Railroad Days celebration of July, 1904, when a shortline railroad at last linked Tonopah to the outside world and heralded progress and prosperity in the years before bonanza became borasca.*

Railroad days — July 25, 26, and 27, 1904. Days are milestones in life, and certainly these days were milestones in Tonopah's life and mine.

July 25 had been selected as the date for the driving of the last spike — a gold one, of course — to mark the completion of the railroad between Tonopah Junction, a few miles south of Sodaville, and Tonopah. The days of the stagecoach and twenty-mule team were drawing to an end.

A three-day celebration was planned. For weeks committees had been working on details: literary exercises, music, decorations, games, drilling, free lemonade, and ice cream, dancing, fireworks. The whole world was invited. Also coming to town was the "Carson Band," a group of young businessmen from Carson City who played at every notable event in Nevada.

For several months Hugh and I had sauntered each evening to the brow of the hill, whence we could view the sunset and at the same time watch the daily progress of the distant speck on the desert that we knew was the railroad construction camp. To my ever-dramatic mind, the camp, as it grew larger with its slow advance, had all the elements of a deliverer.

By the middle of July it was a fifty-fifty gamble as to

whether the rails would actually be in place in time for the celebration to proceed on schedule. Every available man was hired, and many men in town volunteered their services. As a result, the road was graded, the ties placed, and the rails laid. The engine was run over the rails and spikes were driven into the rails behind the engine. Anything and everything was done that would help to lay the last few miles of track before the appointed day.

About five o'clock in the afternoon of July 24, the last rail was in place, the engine pulled into the freight yard, and every mine whistle in the district turned loose to let us know the celebration was really on. But no one knew even then whether the track could be made safe for the special trains to roll over them into the Tonopah station, trains that were already on their way from Reno, Carson City, and even from California On the edge of town, huge bonfires made great pools of light, in which we could see men and horses sweating and straining to anchor the rails to the ties. In case the track could not be used, Tasker Oddie's teams would stand by to haul the passengers that last quarter mile.

Sometime around daybreak I awoke suddenly to a sound on the air — music! band music! from somewhere far off. Cold shivers ran through me, and I wept softly, much to Hugh's puzzlement. Never have I heard music more tremblingly beautiful than the distant strains of the Carson Band on its way uptown from the station in that early morning of July 25, 1904.

The day dawned clear and hot. At eight o'clock the celebration started with the detonation of several rounds of powder from the top of Mount Oddie. As early as possible I dragged Hugh downtown, determined not to miss a thing. Many of the events took place on the two main streets, now hung with flags and festooned with colorful bunting. Knowing that we would have a ringside seat, we had invited our little coterie of friends to come to Hugh's office in the Golden Block and enjoy the sights from the cool vantage point of its wide windows

The day was a welding of the pageantry of the Old West and the New: Indians, cowboys, ranchers, miners, prospectors, soldiers of fortune. Each group had its sprinkling of women and children, all decked out for the holiday; and there was something for everybody.

At ten o'clock came the parade with handsome old John Cuddy at its head, mounted on a brown horse, his white hair and flowing mustache making him every inch the Marshal of the Parade. Behind him, in blue and white uniform, marched the Carson Band, followed by Indians in full regalia, eagle-feather headdress, fringed deerskin, and all. In the center of the parade came one of Tasker's road-grading wagons turned into a float, on which rode four young girls with fluttering white dresses and flowing hair. After them came a tent mounted on a small truck pulled by a couple of young men. Tied to the back of the truck was a little grey burro, and fastened to his harness was a canvas banner that read, ME AND JIM FOUND TONOPAH.

One of the young ladies from the float, Miss Belle Pepper, was crowned Queen of Railroad Days in a pretty ceremony on the platform erected in the center of the street. This was followed by "literary exercises" consist-

The most popular vantage points for the parade were the "box seats" on top of the Golden Block.

For the children, the highlight of Railroad Days was J. H. Hall's free ice cream and lemonade.

ing of a stirring speech and closing with a solo by Lenore Sollender. Then we all trouped down to the railroad yard to see the driving of the golden spike.

The afternoon, although very hot, was given over to races and contests: pie-eating, where little boys emerged from a tussle with blackberry pie looking as if they had been attacked by swarming bees; ladies' nail-driving contests, where women of all ages drove nails into a plank, hitting more fingernails than wire ones; races of every description for all ages, sexes, and nationalities.

At the scene of the contests and races, Al Meyers was king. Al, one of the original locators of Goldfield, along with Charlie Taylor and Harry Stimler, had made a fabulous fortune through the sale of his claims. On this day he became a self-constituted dispenser of prize money,

Main Street, 1903. Before the railroad, all freight had to be hauled in via wagons.

standing in the center of the street and singling out disconsolate losers. "Hey, you there! Tell the kid with the freckles to come here." Over and over again I heard him call to some youngster in the crowd. "Did you get a prize?"

"No, sir."

"Why sure you did. Here, here's a dollar. That's third prize. You ran a fine race. Here, you go over there and tell that fellow you want some ice cream. Is this your sister? No? Well, you take her along anyway. Hey, what's the matter, a big galoot like you comin' in fourth? Here! Now go get yourself an ice cream soda. Go on. Quit cryin'!"

"Aw, I ain't cryin'!"

"Sure you are. They can hear ya bawlin' way over to

Ore wagons, draped with bunting, joined the parade.

Goldfield. Go drown yer sorrow in a soda mug. Go on."

"Gee, thanks, mister. Hey, fellas! He gave me five dollars! Come on!"

"What's the matter, lady? Ya didn't miss them nails, by any chance? Yea, sure, that's strawberry jam on your fingers. Well, here, go buy the old man a drink. Tell 'im you got first prize for bein' game. Tell 'im I said so."

All afternoon, out in the hot sun, Al Meyers picked losers and handed out dollars. Many men have that sympathetic impulse to comfort the loser but few have the chance or the wherewithal to accomplish it.

Later that night we heard that Al was down in a back room of the Merchants Hotel playing roulette with twenty-dollar gold pieces, five to each turn of the wheel. It was always a show when any of the big gamblers got to playing for high stakes, so we went down to swell the crowd standing in the shadows watching. Al Meyers on one side of the table under the big light and the dealer on the other, the little ball spinning, dropping at last into a slot with that unmistakable click that breaks the breathless tension.

What Al Meyers lost that night was up in the thousands. His money didn't last very long, but while it did, he lived his idea of a king's life. That's something of which few of us can boast

Many spectacular figures were in evidence during the celebration. Hugh called my attention to Governor John Sparks, walking down the street with another man. The man with the governor, Hugh told me, was Jack Davis, Sparks' hired gunman. January Jones and his pal Bar Francis, swaggered down the street among the merrymakers, too, both ostentatiously carrying their guns.

During the celebration I also had a glimpse of Harry Ramsey, which explained to me somewhat his reputation as a cold, deliberate killer. I wanted to feel the excitement of the contests at close range, so I left the vantage point of Hugh's office window to skirt the crowd below. Looking through the mass of spectators, I caught sight of Harry Ramsey as he faced a man in front of him, his lips taut and his eyes glistening. In a moment the other man scuttled away. I would like to have known what Harry Ramsey's next move would have been if his antagonist had not disappeared, for every time I recall the incident, it gives me the same shiver I had that day.

The second Railroad Day was marked by a unique event of mining-town celebrations, the double-handed drilling contest. Two men work as a team, with steel drills and a hammer weighing sixteen pounds, to drill holes in granite, competing with other teams for prizes running into hundreds of dollars. A drilling contest is the most exciting exhibition of skill and courage I know of. Today it is a thing of the past. When machine drills were invented, hand drilling was over; but in 1904, miners drilled in competition to prove who had the surest aim, the quickest stroke, and the strongest arm. Under the platform in the center of the street was a huge block of granite, a selected piece of Gunnison granite hauled in by mule team from Colorado for the occasion. The top of the block was flush with the floor of the platform, and into this rock each two-man team would drill for fifteen minutes. The pair reaching the greatest depth was the winner.

The team, with its seconds, comes onto the platform stripped to the waist. One man carries the hammers, and his partner carries a long, heavy roll of canvas, which contains the two sets of drills, sharpened for the contest. Each drill is about an inch in diameter, and they vary in length from a foot to four feet.

The double-handed drilling contest—an event unique to mining town celebrations.

Each man has his own hammer and set of drills. All are carefully laid out in precise order after being examined by an impartial official. The short drills are placed near at hand, the longer ones at the back within reach. Then, with infinite care, each team selects the spot in the granite boulder where they will drill. Granite has seams that are often harder or softer than the rest of the rock, so the spot selected is important.

Two men get into position, one crouching down and clasping the shortest drill close around the head, his partner standing over him, his hammer uplifted, ready to deliver the first blow. The timer gives the signal by touching him on the shoulder.

The first tap of the hammer is soft, just enough to give the drill a straight push, for the hole must be started straight. The next blow is a bit harder, and by the fourth blow, or the fifth, the hole is on its way, and the man's body bends to the blows as they grow more and more powerful.

A slow-running hose attached to a barrel pours water into the hole as the man crouching over the drill moves it skillfully up and down and around after each hammer blow. At all costs the steel must be kept from sticking in the rock. If a drill sticks—"fitchered," they call it—precious seconds are lost, for it must be tapped loose before it can be struck again. If it does not spring loose, the spectators know it will break off, and the unlucky pair must start a new hole.

Every thirty seconds the partners change places. When the moment approaches for the change, the man holding the drill grasps his own hammer with one hand and gives the drill one last turn with the other, while the timer, watch in hand, touches the standing partner on the shoulder. At the signal the man flings his hammer aside, then crouches down and grabs the drill with both hands as his partner springs to his feet ready to deliver the next blow. The new man on the hammer comes down without missing the rhythm of a stroke or the fraction of a second.

As the depth of the hole increases and a longer steel is necessary, the first drill must be jerked out and the new one inserted without breaking the rhythm of the hammer. This is easy when the drills are short, but when a three-foot steel must be yanked out and a four-foot one

dropped unerringly into the inch-wide hole, the maneuver must be accomplished with unerring precision. If the drill is lifted a fraction of a second too slowly, a stroke can be lost, which can mean a half inch at the finish.

Listen to the crowd! Cheers, catcalls. Bets are yelled out. "Lean on that stick there!" "Two to one on this team!" "We got our money on ya, Bill!" "I'll take ya!" "Put 'er down, boys!" Twelve minutes. Thirteen, fourteen! The timer lifts his hand above the bending backs.

A tug-o'-war between men from the West End and the Extension. When their faces turned black, Mrs. Brown left.

The hammer blows quicken. The crowd sways and murmurs. Fifteen minutes! The hand descends.

The drillers stand panting while every drop of water is sucked out of the hole, and the officials insert the measuring rod. The crowd is still. The official straightens up and bellows: "Thirty-nine and one-half inches!" More cheers, a few groans, more betting. By this time, the next team is in place, and their followers are cheering for them

A drilling contest has everything: technique, beauty, endurance, speed, and danger. If the hammer descends a fraction of an inch out of line on the tiny head of the drill, a man's hand may be crushed.

Once during my life in Tonopah I saw a man's hand struck. Suddenly the hammer poised in midair. The crowd groaned, knowing what had happened. After an instant flinch, the man crouched over the drill, looked up at his towering partner, and yelled, "Come down, you!" Down came the hammer. The men cheered and the women cried. The hand on the drill began to turn red, but still it held on to the drill. When the injured man's turn came to rise and hold the hammer, the blood crept down his arm until it looked as if it had been thrust into a pot of red paint. The blood ran into the hole and mixed with water from the hose. Everytime the hammer descended, the red fluid sloshed up and spattered nearby onlookers. The man sagged lower after every blow, but he never gave up until the timer's hand signaled fifteen minutes. Then he fell over in a dead faint. The platform looked like a slaughtering block.

Champion drillers were kings, known and feted throughout the mining world. The prize money was accompanied by cases of champagne and liquors.

The third day's celebration consisted of a single-handed drilling contest, cowboy races, bucking contests, and a baseball game. Late in the afternoon we went down near the railroad to see the tug-of-war, but when the men turned black, it made me sick and I fled. Every night there was dancing, and on the last evening, a gorgeous display of fireworks. □

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

Number 2 in a Series

"We cross the prairies, as of old
The Pilgrims crossed the sea..."

BY JOAN PATERSON KERR

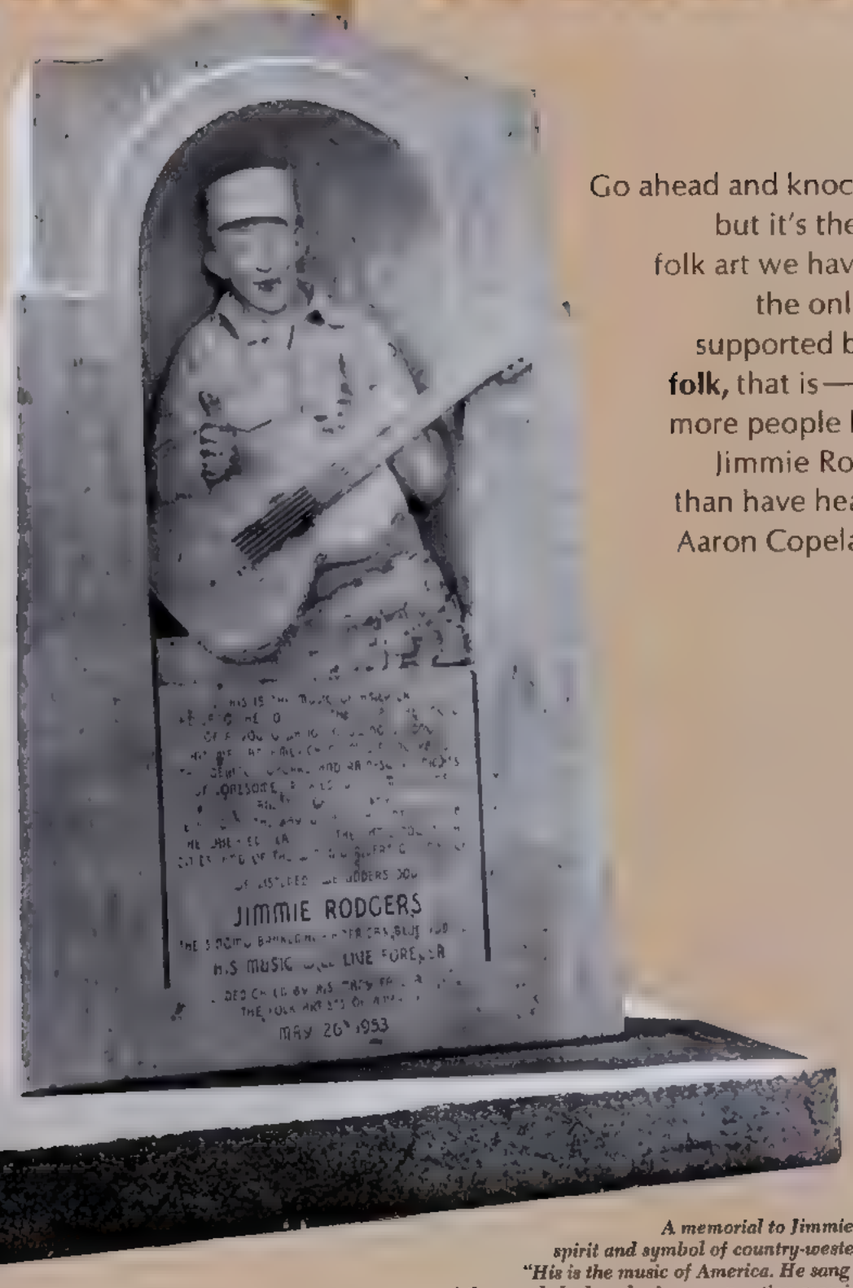
THE PHOTOGRAPH ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES of a lonely burial plot on the Kansas prairie at the turn of the century is one that I find immensely compelling. Among thousands of pictures that I examined, while putting together *American Album*, it instantly captured my imagination. Beyond the strangely ornate monument to Patrick Flanagan, of County Roscommon, Ireland, nothing is visible in this picture across the endless plain to the far-off horizon. Not a figure, not a building, not even a road meets the eye in this bleak landscape. But the photographer, Joseph J. Pennell of Junction City, Kansas, has caught a little girl in the act of placing flowers on what is probably her grandfather's grave. Standing close by, hand on hip and hat in hand, dressed in Sunday best, staring sternly at the camera, is surely Patrick Flanagan's son come on a Sunday to pay his respects. The grave of the mother waits silently beside her husband's, her side of the granite monument still uncarved. This single photograph speaks eloquently of so many things in our country's past: the immigrant settlers, the lonely frontier, generations and family ties, the role of religion. The impact is harsh and tender, bittersweet, and strangely moving.

Joseph J. Pennell, the photographer, has left a body of satisfying work of his years in early Kansas, and it is a happy thing to report that his old glass plates have received the care they deserve. They were presented to the University of Kansas in 1951 by Pennell's son, Joseph Stanley Pennell, a graduate of the University and a distinguished novelist. Here they came under the supervision of Robert Taft, a professor of chemistry, and an authority on American historical photographs. Taft may have been an excellent instructor in chemistry, but his fame is assured by *Photography and the American Scene*, published in 1938 and still the acknowledged bible for anyone seeking information on the photographers who recorded the early life of America. Taft, recognizing the value of Pennell's visual history of Junction City and the nearby Army post, Fort Riley, photographed between the years 1888 and 1922, accomplished the monumental task of assembling the thirty thousand glass plates—selecting the most important and representative to be printed, catalogued, and indexed. After extended study, most of the negatives and prints have been identified and dated with considerable certainty. In my own search for photographs for *American Album* in a sizable number of archives and attics, state and local historical societies, collections of private owners, museums, and universities —where glass plates are all too often boxed haphazardly in the basements—the Pennell collection stood out as a fine example of what can be done to preserve this country's photographic past in a useful fashion. □

Joan Paterson Kerr *is Art Editor of* American Heritage, *and spent several years collecting and collating the photographs for* American Album, *recently issued by American Heritage Publishing Company. The photograph on the following pages is from the book and is one of more than three hundred reproduced in a sweeping pictorial survey of a vanished American world.*

FLANAGAN

Country-Western:



Go ahead and knock it… but it's the only folk art we have—— the only one supported by the **folk,** that is——and more people **heard** Jimmie Rodgers than have heard **of** Aaron Copeland…

A memorial to Jimmie Rodgers, spirit and symbol of country-western music: "His is the music of America. He sang the songs of the people he loved, of a young nation growing strong. His was an America of glistening rails, thundering boxcars, and rain-swept prairies, great mountains, and high blue sky."

The Music of America

BY JOHN GREENWAY

About forty years ago, when a Texas roughrider, fiddler, and singer named Ken Maynard helped to establish an industry by being the first to sing cowboy songs in the movies, the mass media began at last to take notice of the performers in this new genre of popular art. "Tom Mix and his wonder horse, Tony, are featured this week," the Dallas *Times Herald* graciously announced. "Tom shows careful training in some of the stunts, in which he exercised almost human intelligence." Even Maynard himself was not always scrupulously differentiated from his horse. The Boston *Traveler* reported in a background piece, "The Ken Maynard horse is Tarzan. He is married to a non-professional."

These items may not have been just slips of the linotype. Worse was tried in *TV Guide* a few months ago by a famous author sent on expedition to "the hard lard belt" to discover why country-western music was so popular outside New York. He failed in his "hatchetation," but it was not his heart or his editor that hindered him, for on this occasion *TV Guide* was using the same critical approach as *Partisan Review*. The prejudice is universal, even among the scholars. Hundreds of genuine folk musicians cut thousands of phonograph records of undoubted folksongs for a quarter of a century before the *Journal of American Folklore* published so much as a condemnatory review. When the *Journal* finally gave an entire issue to the consideration of hillbilly music in 1965, most of its professional subscribers took this as the last certain sign that Armageddon was at hand and that the wolves of the evening were loose upon the world. The folklorists were content to go on as they had been doing for nearly a century, pleasuring themselves with the artificially romanticized folksong of moribund Celtic peasants—peasants whom the unromantic English anthropologists had in mind when they called the wheelbarrow the most important invention affecting human evolution, because it enabled the Irish to walk on their hind legs.

The prejudice of Americans against their only living folk music is so strong and pervasive that it cannot be explained by standards of scholarship or esthetics. It is a matter of social pathology. Like sex and liquor, the human organism takes naturally to the strong rhythms of country-western music, and so the exigencies of social order require that they be publicly abominated and privately approbated. Wherever people have not been coerced by the threat of social ostracism and eternal damnation to renounce sin and gin and hillbilly song, all are rapturously enjoyed. Americans would like to believe that their contribution to civilization is democracy and the use of technology for spiritual enrichment, but the hard cultural fact of the matter is that the only two exports we have that inexorably displace their native counterparts elsewhere in the world are dollars and hillbilly music. Every western European country has its complex of cowboy singers, jamborees, fan magazines, and radio-television programs. Even in Russia during the most frigid phase of the Cold War there was a hot trade in smuggled Elvis Presley records. England has six country-western periodicals circulating overground. Australia, to which our country-western music was exported more than thirty years ago via Canadian interpreters of Mississippi's "Yodeling Brakeman," Jimmie Rodgers, has now an independent tradition almost as strong as our own, with a half-dozen western record companies and as many traveling shows that bring the outback its only entertainment. Jimmie Rodgers's records are pirated by at least eight record manufacturers in India. One of the best collections of Jimmie Rodgers's records outside of the contiguous United States is held by an Eskimo in Point Barrow, Alaska. When Hank Snow visited Japan

in 1964, he was identified on that country's panel show "What's My Line" in thirty seconds – perhaps only to be expected in a land so orientally inscrutable that it has its own "Tokyo Grand Ole Opry" as well as other regularly broadcast country-western shows, staffed by bands like Jimmie Tokita and His Mountain Playboys and Keiichi Termoto and His Country Gentlemen. Meanwhile back here in the United States, such a fascinating and complex development as Bluegrass music, used as a musical transition in the motion picture *Bonnie and Clyde*, can be dismissed by a national newsmagazine as "another name for hillbilly music." But then if the general press knew what Bluegrass was all about, it wouldn't be mentioned at all.

Everybody approves of ballet, as everybody will tell you, though there is not a single ballet company in the world that survives without enormous subsidies. Everyone dotes on symphonic music (ask anyone), but symphonic orchestras are as rare as whooping cranes and even harder to keep alive. Cowboy singers stitch a few curlicues on their riding clothes and thereby set the intelligentsia howling with pejorative laughter, yet this same intelligentsia gravely honors the panoply of the Moment of Truth when a matador steps into the arena in one of the silliest costumes ever worn in public by a normal male. Hillbilly fiddlers often have the same consummate mastery of their instruments as first violinists, but they cannot wear evening dress; they are damned by the tradition that began when the first hillbilly band had to dress up as yokel clowns before they could make a public appearance in an eastern city. These early orchestras had to carry names like "Pie Plate Pete and His Two-Cylinder Cob Crushers." City folk think this is all very funny, but the funniest thing I ever experienced in a hillbilly situation was a concert violinist, hired for the evening to replace a missing fiddler in a country band in Central City, Colorado, trying to play "Turkey in the Straw" from sheet music.

Solid pioneering folk made western music, just as they made the West. Their ideas about their music were as liberal as their ideas about sin and drink, and they cultivated it until the supercilious eastern intellectuals, who opposed western expansion as they opposed western culture, could at last be persuaded to touch it without fear of being bitten or besmirched. Still the eastern opinion-makers approached the rural music as a daring adventure, like eating chocolate-covered ants. They had to have a name for this queer caterwauling from the mountains, and ultimately the most insulting name prevailed—"hillbilly"—which at the time of its introduction in 1900 had precisely the connotations of its synonym "turdkicker." Little distinction was made on geographical provenance; John Ford made a western horse-opera in 1918 with the working title *Hill Billy*.

"Hillbilly," like "Puritan" and "Quaker," was born in contempt but shed its slur by constant use. The word is now recognized by ethnomusicologists as a generic term comprising various definite subdivisions, like Western Swing, Mountain, Old Timey, Rockabilly, Citybilly, Cajun, Zydeco (Negro Cajun), Cowboy, Sacred (not to be confused with Sacred Harp, a highly specialized genre on the border between hillbilly and more traditional folk music), Truck Driver (which evolved from Railroad, Hobo, and other transportational folksong), Bluegrass, and Country-Western – which latter term is displacing "hillbilly" as the generic name. All these categories can be further subdivided by the expert; for example, an ethnomusicologist with knowledge and a good ear can tell the very prison where a man did his time by his singing and instrumental style. The Sugarland Sound (from the Sugarland State Prison Farm in Texas) is not the same as the Angola Sound (from the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola). Here, too, invidious connotations tend to be worn away; hardly anyone associates the lament "Birmingham Jail" with the two guitarists who recorded it after their release from that particular pokey; and no parent who puts on a record of Burl Ives singing "The Big Rock Candy Mountain" for his children knows that this was written as a parody on the tales of temptation told to country boys by railroad tramps recruiting them for homosexual purposes.

INVENTIONS, DISCOVERIES, and other significant events are always products of cultural movement, although for our easier understanding we try to simplify the process by attributing them to Great Men. If, however, we must select one man to receive credit for the renascence of country music, it is Henry Ford. Ironically, Ford was responsible for none of the things history credits him with—the invention of the automobile, the first Ford car, the Ford Motor Company, mass production of automobiles, standardization of parts, line production, the planetary transmission, the assembly line, the Model T, the Model A, the Ford V-8, the Lincoln, or even his famous signature (which was made by C. H. Wills with a child's printing set)—and he is never honored for the one

thing he did: the creation of national interest in old-time fiddling as part of his futile effort to take the country back to where it had been before the Fords rattled it into the twentieth century. Ford brought old-time fiddlers from all over the country to populate his Dearborn necropolis and gave one of them, Mellie Dunham, the title of national fiddle champion and a prize of three dollars.

In choosing fiddlers as the ideal purveyors of the old music, Ford demonstrated that same native canniness that prevented him from selling out to General Motors in 1908 for three million dollars (he was willing enough to sell, but he would not take a check). There is a gradation in status among rural musicians, and the fiddler is clearly at its summit. The only challenge to the fiddler's position over the years has been in Bluegrass music, which allows the five-string banjo solo performance, though even in that genre the fiddler is still dominant. The fiddler's pride is the fiddler's joy, and if the outsider does not understand the pecking order among folk musicians, so much the worse for him. I remember introducing at a Colorado Springs folk festival a fiddler and his guitar accompanist, whose name was given to me as "John Smith," a properly undistinguished name for a fiddler's guitarist. Smith played his chords dutifully behind the fiddling and otherwise behaved himself, for it was not unheard of for a fiddler literally to kick a guitarist off the stand if he intruded into the melody. Some time afterward I learned that "John Smith" was Johnny Smith, who that year had been elected the nation's outstanding jazz guitarist by *Playboy* magazine. The reason so many old "fiddle tunes" are wordless is that fiddlers discouraged all kinds of competition, even singing, and songs that appealed to fiddlers shortly became instrumental pieces. "The Eighth of January," written a century and a half ago to commemorate Jackson's victory over the British on that day in 1815, lost its words early in its history to the fiddle. Jimmie Driftwood's popular "Battle of New Orleans" gave the old tune a new set of words on the same subject.

To each of these fiddling craftsmen the thought of Henry Ford awarding national titles to any other mortal man set the woods and hills and plains afire with competitive rage. Fiddlers streamed in to compete at local and regional conventions for the chance to challenge Ford's champions. It is significant rather than merely sinister that these conventions were often sponsored by the Ku Klux Klan. Whatever outsiders from the North think about the Klan, its fundamental purpose has al-

A group of artists lines up for the Fiddlers' Convention in Mountain City, Tennessee, 1925. Note the sponsoring KKK poster in the bank window.

Jimmie Rodgers with the Carter Family, a group whose distinctive country style had considerable impact on the development of American popular music.

Country-western has not only been a folk music supported by the folk—it has been played by the folk. Above, the Charlie Bowman family at home in Tennessee. Left to right: Charlie, Pauline, Jennie, Lester, Donnie, Howard, Dorothy, Jasper, Hansel, and wife, Fannie.

ways been to give a rural folk, harried by encroaching urban culture and its socially disruptive ideas, the opportunity to renew tribal cohesion. If outsiders disapprove of it, well, then, so much more reason for doing it. There is no evidence of any fiddler boycotting a competition because it was Klan-sponsored. The band that established hillbilly music under that name — Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters, otherwise known as "The Hill Billies" — made their initial reputation at one of these Klan fiddlers' conventions in 1925.

In spite of Ford's energetic efforts, it is likely that fiddlers and their music might have become just another relic of things past had it not been for the great invention of his friend, idol, and political advisor, Thomas Alva Edison. Edison, who was no more burdened with intellectual subtleties than Ford, told Henry that "history is bunk" (like the automobile and other things, later attributed to Ford himself), but ironically his phonograph enabled hillbilly music to have a history. In the first year of this century Edison cut a cylinder of an Arkansas folk musician named Fiddlin' Bob Haines. Unhappily for his place in history, Haines' record was never released commercially.

Like every historical event, the beginning of commercially recorded country-western music is harder to find the more deeply one looks into it. Suddenly and independently, in 1922 and 1923, a number of the new record companies began to make discs of the old-time fiddlers. Possibly the first was Eck Robertson, a Virginian emigrated to Texas, the first performer to wear cowboy clothes, claimant to the national fiddling championship, and perhaps the best of all the old-time fiddlers.

Alfred Kroeber, the anthropologist who delved most profoundly into the difficult question of the process of invention and discovery, concluded, after a long study of the many inventors of the steamboat, that culture does the inventing. Given the steam engine and the boat, he said, the steamboat is an inevitable self-invention. If any man is to receive the accolade for something no one did, it is he whose personal qualities made the invention commercially feasible. Fitch couldn't even get Ben Franklin to invest in his invention, so Fulton gets the credit. The rule applies as well to country-western music; given the music and the phonograph, commercial country-western records were inevitable. The question then is simplified: which of the pioneer recording artists made the big money? Who is the Great Man?

You can take your choice of more than fifty names—all of them belonging to the same man, born in Jefferson, Texas, in 1883, as Marion G. Slaughter. He had been singing concert and light opera with moderate success for Edison and Columbia records as early as 1916. In 1924 Charles Edison, the inventor's son, advised him to get into the new hillbilly field. Slaughter—or Vernon Dalhart, as he is far better known (a pseudonym made up of the names of two Texas towns)—devised a generalized hillbilly-western accent, representative of no particular place but somehow acceptable to all rural ears, and recorded "The Prisoner's Song" and "Wreck of the Southern Old 97," the latter song learned from a recording made the previous year by Henry Whitter, one of the claimants to primacy in commercial recording. Without modern advertising or saturation promotion in other media, without any stimulus except aural transmission, this and later remakes of the same record by Dalhart—on twenty-eight different labels under a variety of pseudonyms—sold twenty-five million copies. The history of his recording is a deliberately tangled skein; recording contracts were then voluntary submissions to permanent and unprofitable servitude, and artists evaded the oppressive obligations by taking different names and recording for different companies. Dalhart has been found hiding behind half a hundred pseudonyms. Other singers took up some of these pseudonyms as their own, while record companies exploited the same record by issuing it on fictitious labels to evade royalty payments. The Gennett company, hardly known under its own name, released its masters to hundreds of putative record companies for distribution under their own labels—such improbable music firms as Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, Kress, J. C. Penney, Newberry, and Woolworth.

As anyone might anticipate, this sort of loose behavior made ripe compost for copyright litigation. Singers got higher royalties for songs they wrote, and radio stations and other outlets insisted on paying somebody to absolve themselves of legal trouble later, so everybody copyrighted everything. "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" is found in Carson J. Robison's *Tip Top Album* attributed to:

E. V. Boby [a misprint for Robison's usual ghost, "E. V. Body"] *Special reprint permission granted to Tip Top Pub. Co., Inc., N. Y., by Joe Davis, Inc., 1619 Broadway, N. Y. Copyright assigned 1931 to Joe Davis, Inc. Copyright 1929 by Triangle Music Publ. Co. Inc., N. Y. International Copyright Secured.*

The song was actually written in 1906 by Harry (Mac) MacClintock, whose pick-up band established the I.W.W.

(Industrial Workers of the World) as the first revolutionary organization to use music as well as dynamite to effect social change. Carson Robison, by the way, a Kansan—who was Vernon Dalhart's guitarist until Dalhart made the disastrous personal decision to go it alone (he died as a hotel night clerk)—had a long career as a leader of western bands, singer, and, under his own collection of pseudonyms, composer of more than three hundred songs, many of which he didn't write. When A. P. Carter, leader of the Carter Family, the most influential of all hillbilly groups, was confronted with evidence that he had not written many of the songs he had claimed and was being paid for, he admitted, "Well, maybe I didn't write them, but I *wrote them down.*"

It is another anthropological truism that a culture is finally the best judge of what is good in it, not its professional critics. Few of the serious artists in poetry, painting, sculpture, and music consciously know that these forms have exhausted their traditional patterns. Critics for their own livelihood pretend that American fine arts are not execrable, just as sportswriters perpetuate the notion that some boxing matches are honest. Serious artists starve unless they can sell their work to people who would just as soon pay the same inflated prices for imperfectly-printed postage stamps. But culture, aware of where the action is, gives its commendation to the best art — commercial art — with the only expression of commendation it has: money. Serious singers get fifty dollars for an occasional wedding or *bar mitzvah,* but the better country-western singers and musicians are industries unto themselves. Buck Owens, popular singer out of Sherman, Texas, was honored by the Bakersfield, California, Chamber of Commerce three years ago not only because of his position on the country-western charts, but because of the philanthropy he was able to sustain with his two music-publishing firms, one printing company, two broadcasting companies, a production company, and a public relations firm. Owens is only typical of the modern successful country-western singer — music magnate. Lonzo and Oscar, country-western parodists who still affect the old idiot-yokel costumes, have twenty writers in their stable.

BECAUSE OF AN HISTORICAL ACCIDENT, commercial country-western music has settled in Nashville, Tennessee. On November 28, 1925, the director-announcer of the newly opened Station WSM, George D. Hay, brought an old-time fiddler, Uncle Jimmy Thompson, to the carbon

The "Singing Brakeman" with the "Cherokee Kid."

All the photographs for this article were obtained through the courtesy of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit corporation in the Folklore and Mythology Center of the University of California at Los Angeles. The purpose of the Foundation is to further the serious study of those forms of American folk music disseminated by the commercial media. For more information, see the bibliographic note on page 41

The music of the land meets the Electronic Age: the cast and characters of WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" in the Nashville studio.

microphone. Uncle Jimmy had challenged Henry Ford's Mellie Dunham, but Dunham avoided the confrontation. "He's afeared of me," said Uncle Jimmy. That was the beginning of hillbilly music's most prestigious radio jamboree, "The Grand Ole Opry," though the name was not devised until a little later, when one night, after its preceding program of symphonic music from New York went off the air, Hay took issue and umbrage with a remark made by its conductor, Dr. Walter Damrosch. Damrosch stated authoritatively that classical music was no place for realism. Hay replied over the air that "from here on out for the next three hours we will present nothing but realism. It will be down to earth for the earthy. . . . We have been listening to music taken largely from Grand Opera, but from now on we will present 'The Grand Ole Opry.' "

"The Grand Ole Opry" caught on, the way things sometimes do, and now Nashville, because of it, is the largest music-producing center of any kind in the world. "Music Row" in Nashville now has four hundred publishers, eighteen talent agencies, thirty-five record companies, and about five thousand writers and other background people serving an incalculable number of performers. Though the majority of artists are country-western, more than half the records of all kinds produced in the United States are made in Nashville.

From Nashville stretch the tendrils of country-western music. Two hundred radio stations in this country (and more in other countries) program nothing but country-western music; several hundred more depend on it for much of their programming. In 1964 guitar sales first went over the annual mark of one million units, more than the sales of all other band instruments together. A country-western music magazine was launched two years ago guaranteeing its advertisers a hundred-thousand copy circulation immediately. The spin-offs from this activity are expectedly multifarious: embossed sweatshirts, pin-up photos of country-western stars, bracelet charms, pot holders, tie tacks, playing cards, bumper stickers, cookbooks (there is even a Smiley Burnette cookbook),

and negotiable dollar bills with country-western photographs on the front in place of George Washington. It is a long road surely from the time Grandpa Jones remembers, when his band came home from a contribution appearance with their kitty full of frogs. "At least we had something to eat that night," he recalls. Everyone in the business has similar memories of the bad old days. I once played with a group of old-timers who reminisced about their Depression experiences as entertainers in the bars along Denver's skid row — Larimer Street. "Did you have a guarantee?" I asked. "Naw," said the fiddler-leader. "We played straight cat."

But now in America whatever is important to the culture becomes an industry, no matter how strident the condemnations of professional critics; and country-western music, which everyone decries, is nearing the billion-dollar-a-year mark — in fine, a folk music supported by the folk.

Because of Nashville's domination of the art and industry, "hillbilly" to the layman means Appalachian mountain music, as jazz to him means New Orleans–Chicago Negro. As in everything false, there is enough truth in these simplicities to assure their survival. The Appalachian folk communities were certainly the hiving-off places for most branches of hillbilly music, but then the rural East was the hiving-off center for everything western. It is likely that the evolution of country-western music would have followed the same path without the southern mountain influence.

Jazz, too, is only partly Negro and partly eastern, even if one does not press the valid argument that African rhythms, styles, and instruments began in the nomadic Dry World to the north and east of Negro Africa. Everyone knows that the jazz musicians took the new music "up the river to Chicago," but few know that white musicians, too, bought the same leftover military band instruments at New Orleans surplus sales and carried them up other rivers — the Rio Grande, the Red, the Pecos, the Brazos.

One must be on guard here, as in more conventional anthropological problems, of stimulus diffusion against what might be called the "Cartographic Illusion." The enormous blanks on the western maps were not actual physical barriers but brief temporal delays to the movement of country-western music. One thinks of the great distances but not of the railroads that pierced them. For over a century now the only distance between two places on the American continent has been the time it took a train to traverse it. Wilf Carter, professionally known as Montana Slim, was a cowboy singer of great influence, being the main conduit through which Jimmie Rodgers was carried to Australia. Carter was born in Nova Scotia (like Hank Snow), went west to Calgary (which erected a statue to him), and began singing. Fred Roden, the Canadian cowboy entrepreneur, remembers how in the early years "every time our trails would cross we would be in two different boxcars. As they passed by I'd look up, and sure enough, there'd be Wilf Carter travelling in the opposite direction."

The greater isolation among these nomadic singers was social, so that western swing was almost wholly a white phenomenon, excluding Negroes, and in turn being excluded by eastern intellectuals from consideration in the history of jazz development. But there were hundreds of important individuals and groups developing western jazz without eastern attention; we can name only a few here:

ERNEST TUBB — "T-U-*Double* B" — the Texas protégé of the great Jimmie Rodgers, inherited Jimmie's guitar and singing style after his death in 1933, gradually developed his own style, wrote hundreds of fine songs, and made hundreds of records as the Texas Troubadour, the Texas Splinter, the Gold Chain Troubadour (he sold Gold

Country-western, the only truly indigenous American art form, is also one of the most exportable of this country's products (exceeded in popularity only by dollars and perhaps Coca-Cola). At the right, Saburo Kawahara belts it out for the Tokyo "Grand Ole Opry."

Chain Flour — flour was a popular sponsoring product for companies selling to home biscuit and bread makers).

Bob Wills, the "Father of Texas Swing," a fiddler in medicine shows before entering his teens, sold flour for the Burris Mills as leader of the Light Crust Doughboys before Pappy O'Daniel took the band away from him.

W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel, hustler of Light Crust Flour, brought out his own product, Hillbilly Flour (supplied to him by General Mills), peddled it with the Light Crust Doughboys (renamed the Hillbilly Boys), ran for governor of Texas to publicize his flour, won election and re-election. O'Daniel was just one of several hillbilly-singer politicians that made not only governor but senator and vice-presidential candidacy as well.

The Beverly Hillbillies, a succession of bands operating out of that city thirty-five years before Jed Clampett moved in.

Gene Autry, a telegraph operator and Sears Roebuck employee until he was discovered by Will Rogers.

Smiley Burnette, Autry's offsider in fifty movies, who began playing a musical saw professionally at the age of nine, eventually mastered a hundred instruments, wrote five hundred songs, and made nearly seventy thousand personal appearances.

Spade Cooley, most tragic of all, who began as a concert cellist, became the "King of Western Swing," murdered his wife, and is now serving a life term.

More names than one could mention, each with a story worth the telling, and each with his story untold because of the pathological American dislike of things genuinely American. To themselves these musicians are drawn by their own camaraderie and forced by outside rejection into a tribal group, intermarrying, bequeathing their instruments to their protégés, naming their children for one another, often giving up entertainment for religious work (like E. C. Ball, Jimmie Rodgers Snow, T. Texas Tyler, U. Utah Phillips), and welcoming "furriners" from the outside world, such as Helen Traubel of the Metropolitan Opera who sang on the Grand Ole Opry, where her appearance was innocently described as a "howling success."

Sometimes the outside world takes one of their inventions and makes it acceptable by disguising it. Cultural opinion-making agencies in the United States have given their imprimatur to Herb Alpert and his Tijuana Brass, but years ago Tex Ritter played the same thing (known then as "Tex-Mex") on a French horn because that was the closest available sound to the horn of the old wagon-train masters. The Beatles were honored by the Queen, who, if pressed, might have acknowledged having heard the name of Elvis Presley, from whom the Beatles' music was adapted, but certainly she would not know the Negro singing around Meridian, Mississippi, where Elvis learned his music.

The microcosm is Bluegrass music that can be heard behind the intruding singing of "The Ballad of Jed Clampett." Beneath its fantastic technical complexities; under its adapted religious harmonies; beyond the façade of esoterism that allows its leading practitioners, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, to play first-rate psychedelic music in San Francisco light shows, lies the hard nucleus of what to the white South is the equivalent of Negro "soul," a social rallying point of a defeated but fighting culture, enfolding its people in a music that takes them back to the last bright days before the Civil War, keeping alive a part of America threatened by the destructiveness of people who do not know even what is good for them, but what is good in them. □

John Greenway, *a frequent contributor to* The American West, *is an anthropologist, folklorist, and a singer-guitarist who has produced ten record albums over the past several years. Currently in Australia to film a motion picture on the Pitjandjarra, he is editor of the* Journal of American Folklore *and author-editor of* Folklore of the Great West *to be published by the American West Publishing Company in 1969.*

An impressive scholarship in hillbilly music is being built now by younger folklorists, but in the Dark Ages the light of knowledge was kept burning by a small group — perhaps a dozen — nonacademic researchers in various parts of the world whose work is in the highest tradition of scholarship. Their leader was John Edwards of Cremorne, Australia, who died untimely in 1960. Edwards bequeathed his collection of records, tapes, and scholarly notes to the United States. They now form the nucleus of the world archive of this material, housed in the John Edwards Memorial Foundation at U.C.L.A., 90024. Other collectors are leaving their materials to the Foundation. Support is asked for this admirable organization, members receive the scholarly periodical, *JEMF Newsletter*.

William Malone's doctoral dissertation, *A History of Country Music in the United States*, is being published by the American Folklore Society and the University of Texas Press. While this article was being written, a Japanese publisher asked permission to translate Malone's work into Japanese.

The best view of country music now in print is the last edition of *The Country Music Who's Who*, 1966, published by Heather Publications, 3285 South Wadsworth Boulevard, Denver, Colorado, 80227.

The "Hillbilly Issue" of the *Journal of American Folklore* is

*Earnest ("T-U-*Double *B") Tubb and friend.*

Volume 78, July-September 1965, available from the American Folklore Society, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19104. The articles are classics of scholarship.

But this music is best heard, not seen. For those who wish to hear its most representative examples, the following records are recommended:

American Folk Music. Eighty-four records bootlegged from masters, cut between 1927 and 1932, in three 12" LP records. Folkways Records, 117 West 46th St., New York. No person pretending to any interest in American culture, whether or not he likes hillbilly music, can support his pretension without this three-record set on his shelves. Needs no more commendation than the Bible or *Webster's New International Dictionary.*

Early Country Music. Fields Ward and His Buck Mountain Band. Historical Records, Box 4202 Bergen Station, Jersey City, New Jersey, 07304. Survey of early Appalachian style.

Great Original Recordings of the Carter Family. Harmony HL 7300 (RCA). A representative collection of selections of the most influential group in the development of American hillbilly music.

My Rough and Rowdy Ways. Jimmie Rodgers. LPM 2112 (RCA). A reissue of some of the best records of the man who, next to the Carter Family, had the most influence on country-western music.

Western Swing. Old Timey LP 105, Box 9195, Berkeley, California, 94704. A collection of western swing from the 1930's, showing the early form of this genre.

Balladeer of the Golden West. Montana Slim (Wilf Carter). Canadian Camden (RCA) CAS 944. An anthology of Carter's best records.

Authentic French Acadian Music. Ambrose Thibodieux, Merlin Fontenot, others. La Louisianne LL 112, Lafayette, Louisiana, 70501. Takes some getting used to, but illustrative of one of the tangential developments of the richest folk music in the world.

Authentic Cowboys and Their Western Folksongs. Mac MacClintock, Carl Sprague, and other early cowboy singers. Victor LPV 522.

Twenty-Five Years of Country and Western Sacred Gospel Spiritual Songs. Delmore Brothers, Cowboy Copas, Moon Mullican. King 807. King Records was the leading purveyor of country-western music after the Second World War, and this material is real down-home singing, not often heard by northerners.

Utah Sings Again. J. R. Hall, "The Utah Cowboy." Bluebonnet BL 115, Box 10188, Fort Worth, Texas, 76114. The Utah Cowboy was actually a Texan, but his singing is typical of all the Chisholm Trail.

The Wonderful World of Country Music. Sixty songs of great country-western hits. Starday Record Company, Box 115, Madison, Tennessee, 37115.

Eastward Ho!

Ezra Meeker Memorializes the Oregon Trail, 1905-1910

BY GLADYS SHAFER

AFTER THE GRUELING JOURNEY across the land, most of those who came West were content to settle down to a routine existence in the vast new frontier country for the rest of their lives. Ezra Meeker, 1852 Oregon Trail pioneer, was an exception—to him life was a continuing promise of adventure, and it is doubtful whether anyone ever tried more persistently to bring that promise to reality. To the end of his ninety-eight years he was dreaming and daring. Many of his ventures fell short of his expectations, but he will be remembered for what he *tried* to accomplish.

Many of the situations he faced were common to the northwest frontiersman, but Meeker was always extending himself, welcoming problems whose solution led to still tougher problems. He apparently gloried in undertaking the seemingly impossible. Consequently, at seventy-six—an age most men are living with their memories—Ezra Meeker, instead of looking back to the successes and failures of the past, embarked on what was probably the greatest adventure of his life.

In 1898 he made the first of four dangerous trips to the Klondike, taking flatboats of fresh garden truck to sell to the miners. Each time he made a good profit, but not an ounce of his gold-dust earnings left the Klondike. Investing all his gains in worthless mining enterprises, he returned home in 1901 a poor man.

In the lonely north country Meeker found time for reflection. His thoughts continually turned to his earlier pioneer experiences, and he realized that without factual records that period of history would be forever lost to the younger generation. When he returned home he must write a book. It took Ezra Meeker three years (1901–1904) to write *Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound: The Tragedy of Leschi*. Published by Lowman, Hanford, Seattle, when he was seventy-four years old, it is today a rare, authoritative source of early northwest history.

The book published, his consideration turned to an even greater challenge, one that had come to be for him a compelling one-man mission. He believed that the fame of the Oregon Trail was "scantily acknowledged," that its name was already almost forgotten, and that "its track was on the verge of impending oblivion." So he proposed to follow the old trail with ox team and wagon—from Tumwater, near Olympia, Washington (which he considered the western terminus of the trail), to one of the Missouri River starting points—and to perpetuate the memory of the trail by establishing monuments at key points along the route.

But he had no money, and even his closest friends considered the venture preposterous. "They actually tried to convince others that it would be an act of friend-

ship to refuse to lend any aid to the enterprise." Failure of his friends to give him financial backing, however, did not stop him.

From three old trail wagons and some new lumber, he contrived a creditable prairie schooner, and he managed to acquire a team of oxen — seven-year-old Twist and five-year-old Dave, an unbroken Montana range steer, "as mean a brute as ever walked on four legs."

Meeker had not been long on the trail before he came to see the difference in the natures of Twist and Dave. Twist was a willing worker, always pulling more than his share; Dave, "a shirk and a fool," would obey a "haw" only from the left side. When he did not choose to pull, he would stick his head high in the air, insolently poke his tongue out, and lag.

By some means Meeker procured feed for the team; and a loyal friend in Tacoma, Henry Hewitt, told him to wire if he ran out of money on the trail, and he would send him enough to come home on. "You mean, to go on with," the resolute old man responded. He had reason to remember Hewitt later.

On January 29, 1906, Meeker started from his home in Puyallup, Washington, first going to Seattle, where he intended to give lectures on the Oregon Trail in churches and halls. But he soon found that people were interested only in his ox wagon outfit, not in paying for indoor lectures. Shipping the outfit from Seattle to Olympia, he arranged for a commemorative marker at Tumwater. Then he went on to Tenino, sixteen miles east of Olympia, where, on February 21, the first monument was erected and dedicated. Tenino stores were closed, and almost the whole population turned out for the event.

Meeker, following the trail south, aroused interest in his mission at Chehalis, Jackson's Corner, Toledo, and other trail points; but at Portland "the prevailing opinion was voiced by a prominent citizen, trustee of a church that voted against allowing use of the church for a lecture, when he said, 'I won't do a thing to encourage that old man to go out on the plains to die.'" Meeker managed to collect two hundred dollars in Portland, however, and the outfit was shipped up the Columbia to The Dalles.

A monument inscribed and set up by the local landmark committee was waiting for Meeker when he arrived; the whole city was expected at the ceremonies, but because of "a fierce cold wind" only a few hundred heard Meeker's dedicatory address. At The Dalles William Mardon joined the outfit to become Meeker's faithful assistant for three years.

During the next fourteen "uninspiring days," through sparsely populated country, the trail was marked here

and there by boulders or cedar posts; on March 31, at Pendleton, the old pioneer was cheered by a crowd of a thousand at the dedication of an inscribed monument, sponsored by the Pendleton Commercial Club.

Beyond Pendleton the misty Blue Mountains loomed; the community of Meacham, well up on the slopes, was to Meeker a key historic point, because Jason Lee, first missionary to the Oregon country, had camped there in September, 1834. But, on the morning following the Pendleton dedication, an eighteen-inch snowfall in the mountains was reported.

Leaving Mardon with the outfit, Meeker took an exploratory trip to Meacham by train, arriving at midnight. The snow was deep, there were no lights visible, and no path cleared to the hotel. This chilling reception was of short duration, however. Early the next morning the local people promised to prepare a foundation if a monument could be supplied and a "sturdy mountaineer" offered to meet Meeker's outfit with a team of horses and help him over the mountains.

Back in Pendleton, a monument was hastily readied and shipped by rail to Meacham; Pendleton even sent an orator to give the dedicatory address. Ceremonies over, the indomitable old pioneer was ready to go on. With the mountaineer's team hitched in front of the oxen, they plodded on to higher and higher levels through axle-deep, twenty-inch snow. "It was a battle that we had to win," Meeker said. "I kept wondering if, like the straw that broke the camel's back, one last snowflake might not defeat us."

Finally across the mountains, Meeker reported that sunshine was let into his heart at LaGrande, where the people set up and dedicated a monument on April 10; they also prepared another monument at the eight-miles-distant Ladd's Canyon, where each school child participated by laying a stone at the base of the shaft.

At the next night's camp the good ox Twist accidentally kicked his master on the right leg; for a month Meeker was badly crippled and in constant pain, and the injury continued to bother him for a long time.

Two thousand people attended ceremonies dedicating a granite monument at Baker; eight hundred school children contributed sixty dollars for a bronze tablet to place on the shaft, and "genuine enthusiasm prevailed."

After similar experiences in Oregon at Mount Pleasant, Durkee, Huntington, Vale, and other points where children contributed their nickels and dimes to establish monuments, Meeker concluded that the most rewarding result of his mission would be the younger generation's pride in the markers they helped pay for. It would give them a continuing interest in the trail.

The trail through Idaho was generously marked; monuments were erected at Old Fort Boise, Parma, Twin Falls, American Falls, Pocatello, Soda Springs, and Montpelier. At Boise, nearly twelve hundred school children contributed to the monument; three thousand attended the dedication on the state house grounds.

East from Idaho, through desolate, uninhabited country, Meeker continually marveled at the unchanged trail: "Miles and miles, worn so deep (100 feet wide and 15 feet deep in places) that centuries of storm will not efface it; generations may pass and the origin of the trail become a legend but the marks will be there . . . a hundred centuries hence." Through this region the trail is unmistakable, but in many more developed areas, where highways, field plowing, and irrigation have filled and leveled the deeply gashed terrain, all traces are gone.

Remote South Pass, that unexpectedly easy, gently sloping passage through the Rockies, was an important landmark to Meeker. After a determined search he found a suitable flat, smooth rock far above the trail, and with the oxen hitched to a borrowed wagon, men from Pacific Springs, a few miles west, helped bring it down. On June 23, a clerk from the store made a cardboard stencil, transferred it to the rock and chipped out the inscription with a cold chisel.

For many miles eastward the trip became a sentimental journey to the old wayfarer; such prominent landmarks as Split Rock, Devil's Gate, and Independence Rock were outstanding monuments in themselves. Camping near Devil's Gate, Meeker looked without success for the grave of his younger brother Clark, who, on his way west in the 1850's, drowned in the Sweetwater River. On famous Independence Rock—that monument a hundred feet high, a mile around, and thirty acres square, upon which passing travelers, even before the day of Fremont (1842), had scratched, painted, or gouged out their names and dates—the old man chiseled "OLD OREGON TRAIL. 1842–57."

Citizens of Casper appointed a committee to arrange for a marker; later a twenty-five-foot monument, costing fifteen hundred dollars, was erected there. At Douglas, where a committee was also appointed and a monument promised, he found a green land of alfalfa fields, small fruit orchards, and large gardens, instead of the arid desert he remembered it to be fifty-four years before. It

Reversing his journey of half a century earlier, Meeker and the ox team pass through the Grand Coulee country of eastern Washington.

reminded the old pioneer nostalgically of his home in evergreen Washington. Camped near a garden, the travelers were treated to a "feast of young onions, radishes, beets and lettuce, enough for several days . . . and we felt we were in the midst of plenty and the guests of friends."

Rolling along eastward, the ox wagon followed the Platte past old Fort Laramie, Scott's Bluff, and Chimney Rock; at North Platte a monument was promised.

Then, on August 9, near Brady, Nebraska, a great misfortune befell the expedition. Steady, dependable Twist began acting strangely, breathing heavily, pulling hard as though trying to pull the whole load. They stopped and put him on the off side, giving him the long end of the yoke, but his strange behavior continued. Perhaps he had eaten some poisonous plant while grazing. Unyoked, he was given big doses of lard and vinegar, but all efforts were futile—within two hours he was dead.

This was a blow; Meeker found himself grieving as one would grieve for a friend: "Twist was the most noble animal I ever saw." Now, with only one ox, and an unruly one, what was he to do? Cash was low. "Notwithstanding the utmost effort and rigid economy," he said, "there did seem at times that an impending financial failure was just ahead." If the old man had not had Henry Hewitt's promise of help, the expedition must surely have terminated right there, just half a state away from its goal.

Twenty-four hours after Meeker wired Hewitt, a check for two hundred dollars was waiting for him at a bank in the next town, Gothenburg. The problems were still far from solved, however. He was unable to find a yoke of oxen, or even a single ox, anywhere; the lone Dave trailed behind while various hired teams of horses pulled the wagon. Meeker even bought a team of cows, intending to break them to the yoke; but one turned out to be a consistent balker, and was sold back to its former owner at a loss of $10.00.

The remaining cow, though unbroken, might have worked with Dave, but the different size and weight of yokes required by the small cow and the large ox made this difficult. More horses were hired, while two bovine animals now trailed behind the wagon. Meeker realized that the day of the ox was past and that losing Twist had created an even greater problem than he had first thought.

It was then that he paused to wonder how sound was this task he had set for himself. He thought of the rebuffs and the doubts of his integrity that he had encountered—although to allay any suspicion of graft or panhandling, he never solicited or accepted personal contributions. And he asked himself why he should go on.

Resolutely, he turned his mind to the many cordial responses he had received along the trail; to Pendleton, Boise, and Casper; to the hundred wooden markers and the nineteen shafts (mostly granite) he had seen erected, and to the promises of more monuments to come. He reminded himself of the favorable publicity the press had given him, preparing the people for his arrival in a town and commending his work when he left. So he went on.

Kearney and Grand Island furnished comfortable campsites, and interested people praised his work; but

the city fathers were not ready to erect monuments. In Fremont, temporarily working the ox and cow together, the outfit led a procession celebrating the semicentennial of the founding of the city. From there Meeker shipped to Lincoln, where at last his financial problems were eased.

Every spare moment in the trail-side camps, he had occupied himself with writing a trail journal—detailing mileage, weather, interesting experiences, and his own musings and reactions. In Lincoln he arranged to have this record printed. The book, titled *The Ox Team,* sold amazingly well; the first edition of a thousand copies was soon gone.

From Lincoln the outfit was shipped to Omaha and the Missouri River—the end of the trail. There an important decision had to be made. Meeker had finally come to the realization that locating and marking the already disappearing Oregon Trail was more of an undertaking than one man could ever accomplish. Why shouldn't he take the ox wagon on to Washington, D. C., and ask Congress for government help?

The idea, apparently so formidable, persisted. He wanted to go home to his concerned family, but possibility of success in the nation's capital spurred him on. Looking over a thousand head of cattle in the Omaha stockyards, he bought an unbroken five-year-old steer. Awkward but willing, Dandy was broken in as they traveled east and faithfully took Twist's place to the finish of the mission.

With the first thousand copies of *The Ox Team* sold and another two thousand selling well, price, one dollar a copy, later reduced to seventy-five cents, Meeker put the book into the hands of a Chicago firm for another printing, but a fire destroyed cuts, plates, and part of the third printing. New cuts and plates were made in Indianapolis—in all, nineteen thousand copies were printed. Proceeds from the sale of these books enabled the expedition to go on to its appointed end.

16. Nooning.

"Nooning" on the plains near Wells Springs, Oregon, 1906. The enterprising Meeker not only wrote and published* The Ox Team, *a 248-page account of his trip ("50¢ clothbound, 35¢ paperbound"), but printed up and sold packets of postcards documenting the journey at twenty-five cents the set.

Much of Meeker's frequent correspondence with his family concerned his wife's failing health. He considered stabling the outfit and returning home for awhile, but assured he was unneeded at home, he did not go. For two months that winter the outfit stayed in Indianapolis; renting a comfortable room, Meeker promoted his cause in every possible way, writing many letters to newspapers and officials of cities that he intended to visit on his way to Washington.

Meeker and his outfit were popular in Indianapolis. The two books, *The Ox Team* and *Pioneer Reminiscences,* sold well all winter; Meeker's man Mardon sometimes sold them on the street, and sales often reached fifty dollars a day.

The reception accorded the unusual expedition varied among the mayors of different eastern cities—Dayton, Buffalo, Albany, Philadelphia. Some helped, some turned cold shoulders. The press, however, was almost unanimously helpful. Meeker escaped a lock-up in New York by flatly refusing to drive his team through the crowds to the police station; and as the police were unacquainted with handling oxen, they had to allow him to put up at a nearby stable. Later on, by devious legal finagling on the part of the acting mayor, the old man was permitted to take his wagon down Broadway and over to Brooklyn. The crowds around the outfit, however, smothered his efforts to present his cause.

Meeker and Theodore Roosevelt exchange pleasantries in front of the old State Department Building, Washington. "Well, well, WELL!" the President exclaimed.

On January 29, 1907—twenty-two months after leaving Puyallup—Ezra Meeker, his assistant William Mardon, his dog Jim, and the oxen pulling the battered old trail wagon passed through the White House gates. The travel-worn pioneer, ushered into the presidential cabinet room by two Washington state congressmen, Senator Pyles and Representative Cushman, received the immediate consideration of President Theodore Roosevelt.

"He didn't have to be told that the trail was a battlefield," Meeker said, "or that the pioneers who occupied the Oregon country while it was yet in dispute between Great Britain and the United States were heroes. . . . He fairly snatched words from my lips and went even farther than I had even dreamed of in invoking government aid to carry on the work. Turning to Senator Pyle, he said, 'I am in favor of this work to mark this trail and if you will bring before Congress a measure to accomplish it, I am with you and will give it my support to do it thoroughly.'"

Bareheaded, with no overcoat, the President went outside with Meeker. "Well, well, *WELL!*" was his typically hearty exclamation when he saw the outfit

"He asked questions faster than they could be answered," Meeker said, "questions that showed his intense desire to get at the bottom facts; soon he had all my story and when he left me, his assurance 'I am with you,' was all I needed." Meeker left the capital on January 8, 1908.

Somewhere along the way Meeker had conceived an even more ambitious purpose than marking the Oregon Trail, and this had become part of his dream. Looking to the future, with horseless-carriage traffic developing, he envisioned a great national highway, to be called "Pioneer Way," that would follow the Oregon Trail from the Missouri River to Olympia, Washington. Wherever he went, he added the "Pioneer Way" proposition to the Oregon Trail project, urging the people to write their congressmen, not only endorsing the bill

For the edification of future generations, Dandy and Dave were stuffed and put on display with Meeker's wagon in the Washington State Historical Society—where they can be seen today. Taxidermists assured Meeker that the pair would last for a thousand years.

pending in Congress to appropriate fifty-thousand dollars to mark the Oregon Trail, but endorsing a measure to build this memorial highway, with the strong argument that in time of possible war a good highway would be vitally essential. "And war *is* possible," he warned, "even with Japan!"

Although no "Pioneer Way," as such, runs across the land today, long stretches of present U. S. Highway 30 follow the route specified by Meeker from the Missouri to the Pacific.

After wintering in Pittsburgh, Meeker came west through St. Louis, Independence, and other Missouri towns, but found it difficult to arouse interest in Oregon Trail monuments. From St. Joseph he shipped the outfit by rail and on June 6, 1908, arrived in Portland, where he "received a cordial welcome from the mayor down to the humblest citizen, and a joyous reunion with two thousand pioneers assembled for their annual meeting."

From Portland the outfit trailed overland, arriving home on July 18 to a jubilant welcome from family and friends, who had so opposed the undertaking.

Later Meeker made other trips east. In 1910 the ox wagon, with Dave and Dandy still on duty, once more crossed the plains, this time in the interest of locating uncertain stretches of trail. By consulting township surveys in the state capitals—Boise, Cheyenne, Lincoln, Topeka—sixteen hundred miles of the trail were plotted. In 1916 Meeker appeared before the House Committee on Military Affairs to make a plea for "Pioneer Way."

His unique way of perpetuating the Oregon Trail attracted nationwide attention; big-city papers from coast to coast made news of his activities. For years the Oregon Trail Memorial Association met annually at some point on the trail to glorify Ezra Meeker. Two years after his death, in 1930, a New York group commemorated his hundredth birthday with a dinner; forty years after his memorable journey, the Kansas City *Star* featured a story recalling his 1908 visit. As first president of the American Pioneer Trails Association, Meeker eventually saw 150 monuments erected along the Oregon Trail.

Dave and Dandy still hold a notable place in the historic scene. When they were old and the days of their Oregon Trail journey at an end, the entire outfit was turned over to the state of Washington. An immense 14 x 28-foot glass display case was installed in the State Historical Building; and housed inside, the battered old prairie schooner headed by the two oxen may be seen today. Taxidermists assured Meeker that, if their handiwork is properly cared for, a thousand years hence "the generation then inhabiting the earth will still be viewing this strange old exhibit from *ancient* Oregon Trail days."

This paragraph, from an address by Meeker on November 6, 1910, epitomizes the vision of the great old man who so unstintingly spent himself to realize a dream:

> Take every man of you a stone to cast upon the monument of the Oregon Trail as hallowed ground trod by the men who opened the way for this grand civilization, that their fame shall abide with us and their very tracks shall be preserved as a sign among you that when your children ask their fathers in time to come saying what mean ye by these stones, then ye shall answer them, these stones shall be for a memorial unto the pioneers who gave their lives that we might possess this heritage. □

Gladys Shafer, *who resided for years in Meeker's own town of Puyallup, Washington, has long had an interest in the career of the old pioneer. She is a frequent contributor to various journals and newspapers in the Pacific Northwest on the history of the region.*

THE AMERICAN WEST REVIEW

THE SPLENDID RANGER

By Jack Burrows

When Owen Wister's Virginian said, softly, to an offensive *hombre*, "When you call me that, smile," he appears to have established the dominant trait, even the prototype, of the dangerous western character—outlaw or lawman—whose words were sparingly used and ominously low-keyed, and whose approach to violence was almost gentle. Wyatt Earp is supposed to have said to divers badmen—quietly, of course—"mind me," while Bat Masterson's approach was a laconic "easy, now." Presumably, failure to smile, mind, or go easy could get a man shot.

Frank Hamer, six-foot, three-inch, two-hundred-thirty-pound Texas Ranger, represents the ultimate in western stereotypy. When the big ranger walked up to a badman and said *"I'm Frank Hamer"* (the title of Hamer's biography, subtitled *The Life of a Texas Peace Officer*), it was at once an introduction, a cold statement of fact, and a warning—Earp, Masterson, and Hickok rolled into one. While any one of those earlier pistoleers would have unhesitatingly shot down an outlaw or adversary, Hamer offered greater variety: he shot, cuffed, even kicked what is euphemistically called the "groin."

Tall as John Wayne, big as Marshal Dillon, high-headed, eyes cold and hooded, with a faintly contemptuous expression about the mouth, Hamer was the perfect western peace officer—on or off video. If a cuff or kick did not suffice, he killed. And if, as reputed, he killed fifty-three men—including, if somewhat inaccurately, Bonnie Parker—he racked up a higher man tally than a combined season's bag on *Bonanza*, *Gunsmoke*, and *Cimarron Strip* and made John Wesley Hardin's "forty notches" look like idle whittling. He shot a varied bag, too, everything from would-be assassins to border outlaws, from a fleeing Negro to Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. But no one ever called Frank Hamer a killer. Although one searches for a euphemism when contemplating that ghastly fifty-three, Hamer almost certainly used the gun only as a last resort. Wounded seventeen times and left for dead on four occasions, Hamer spread his killings over nearly fifty years of enforcing the law along the Texas border, in brawling oilfield camps, and in the cities; there were no personal vendettas settled behind a tin star.

To Texans, including the late historians J. Frank Dobie and Walter Prescott Webb, Hamer was the epitome of high-hatted, high-heeled, homespun incorruptibility and moral rectitude. He was imbued with Calvinistic fatalism—predestination made him reckless, but never careless—and a belief in legal retribution. Corruption was wrong, whether it involved the governor of a state, a renegade border gunrunner, a banker who paid crooked officials bounties for framed "bankrobbers," or even a Texas Ranger. He could shoot Bonnie Parker, but he could not bring himself to call her a bitch: "She was, beggin' your pardon, a bit of a lady dog."

Surprisingly enough, Hamer is not generally well known, even to western historians. One old Texan, still alive and with an enduring interest in western history, who knew Pat Garrett, Emmett Dalton, Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and Ranger Captain John R. Hughes, said, "I never knew Frank Hamer, nor much about him." Unquestionably, Hamer is partially responsible for his own obscurity, since he modestly eschewed publicity during his lifetime in the belief that his story would one day be a financial legacy to his family. Perhaps, also, he has not been considered a legitimate part of the Old West but has been relegated to the historical limbo of the early nineteen hundreds—one boot in the stirrup and the other on the accelerator of a V-8 Ford. Texas was still wild enough for any man at the turn of the century, but the buffalo were gone, the trail drives long since ended, the cow towns dead, and the Comanches huddled sullenly on their reservations. Hamer's most important action was shooting Bonnie and Clyde out of an automobile, not picking a leather-pounding rustler off his bronc.

I'm Frank Hamer: The Life of a Texas Peace Officer by John H. Jenkins and H. Gordon Frost *(Pemberton Press, $7.50)*.

Unfortunately, *I'm Frank Hamer* shows little promise of assisting the passage of the brave and deserving Ranger into western history and folklore. With the exception of the tale of Bonnie and Clyde, the book is little more than a formless, anecdotal recitation, with each succeeding event less memorable than the last. The narrative appears hurried; perhaps publication was racing against the cinema, *Bonnie and Clyde*. There

(Continued on page 59)

LOOKING WESTWARD

By Joseph E. Illick

Ever since my youthful addiction to *True Comics* ("Truth is a thousand times stranger than fiction"), I have been inclined to seek verity in objective fact. Indeed, I began my academic career as a civil engineer but finally settled on history as the literary counterpart of technology. Occasionally I step beyond these confines, my most recent adventure being with Leslie A. Fiedler's **The Return of the Vanishing American** *(Stein and Day, $5.95)*, the final volume of a trilogy.

In conjunction with *Love and Death in the American Novel* and *Waiting for the End, The Return of the Vanishing American* constitutes a single work, the first of whose parts is concerned with *eros* and *thanatos;* the second, with the hope of apocalypse and its failure; the third, with the Indian. All three, as is hinted in this last volume, share a peculiar form of madness that dreams and achieves the true West.

Unfortunately, the message is not altogether clear, and the frustrated reader may be tempted to agree with one of Fiedler's more staid academic colleagues who, on the appearance of *Love and Death in the American Novel*, noted disapprovingly: "He is scarcely a literary critic at all. . . . To him novels are documents from which the secret cultural history of America can be read . . . he does not play fair."

Fiedler's devotion to clarity or justice is less evident than his desire for novelty, for shedding new (if rather shocking) light on old material. In his first book, as the title suggests, Fiedler differentiated the American novel from the European by pointing out the former's failure to deal with love (heterosexuality, homosexuality, incest) and death. *Waiting for the End* added to these themes another: race conflicts and consequent fears of miscegenation. *The Return of the Vanishing American*, though subdued by comparison to its predecessors, draws on all of these ideas to demonstrate that contemporary novelists are creating "New Westerns."

American books, says Fiedler, can be categorized regionally into "Northerns" (austere, Puritanical), "Southerns" (dark, sensual, Gothic), "Easterns" (cosmopolitan, "anti-anti-erotic"), and "Westerns." In the latter the white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant confronts the Indian in the wilderness—"leading either to a metamorphosis of the WASP into something neither White nor Red (sometimes by adoption, sometimes by emulation, but *never* by miscegenation), or else to the annihilation of the Indian (sometimes by castration-conversion or penning off into a ghetto, sometimes by sheer murder)." In the first instance, a New Man may emerge; but if the alternative occurs, "the Western disappears as a living form, for the West has, in effect, been made into an East." Thus, it must be the presence of the Indian that defines the West.

Originally Europeans conceived of America as synonymous with the West —a place to escape to, yet a place forbidden (one can imagine literary critics thanking God for the Garden of Eden). The unexpected natives had also to be accounted for: if denied souls, they could be enslaved; if granted souls, they could be converted or simply recognized as something different (and probably monstrous). These European conceptions, once settlement began, "were radically altered, becoming not myths of others but of themselves." In a bold, almost transatlantic leap, Fiedler declares.

> . . women and Indians make for us a second, home-grown definition of what we consider the Real West, the West of the West, as it were: a place to which white male Americans flee from their own women into the arms of Indian males, but which those white women, in their inexorable advance from coast to coast, destroy.

There are, according to Fiedler, four basic myths that underlie the literary image of the West: the runaway male (Natty Bumppo, Huck Finn); love in the woods (Pocahontas and Smith, Sacajawea and Lewis); the white woman with a tomahawk (Hannah Duston, the anti-Pocahontas); and the good companions in the wilderness (Natty and Chingach-

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A WESTERN GATHERING

Full bibliographic information (number of pages, where published, etc.) for all books reviewed can be obtained from the listing under Current Western Books, page 60

Littlefield Lands: Colonization in the Texas Plains, 1912–1920 by David B. Gracy *(University of Texas Press, $5.00)*.

By W. Eugene Hollon

The University of Texas Press has in recent years published histories of several of the state's major cattle empires. Few of these studies are exciting reading, principally because they deal with facts, not the romance and myth traditionally associated with cow culture. The present volume, following much the same pattern as Ray Stephen's *Taft Ranch* and Lester Fields Sheffy's *Francklyn Land and Cattle Company* is a well researched, heavily documented contribution to local history. It takes up where most serious ranch history stops, analyzing the problems that beset the town builder in attracting potential farmers to a region that before development required several acres to support a single ranch animal.

The process of converting the arid lands of the monotonously flat Texas Panhandle into an agricultural "oasis" began a few years before World War I. The movement started on a big scale with the breakup of the famous XIT Ranch. Major George W. Littlefield, one of the most enlightened "cattle kings" that Texas ever produced, bought a 312,175-acre section of the old XIT, formerly known as the Yellow House Ranch. He created the Littlefield Cattle Company in 1912 and founded the town of Littlefield. (Those unfamiliar with Texas geography might appreciate knowing that Littlefield is not far from Muleshoe.)

Most of the present volume is devoted to the creation of the company, searching for underground water for irrigation, planting trees, establishing schools, opening a bank, and obtaining a railroad line. The final chapter deals with the people who moved onto the Littlefield tracts—where they came from, how they adjusted to a strange environment, and whether they succeeded. Between 1912 and 1920 a total of 464 farms and town lots were sold. The names of the original purchasers, with their nationality and religion, are listed in the Appendix. Littlefield's agent, Arthur P. Duggan, concentrated his recruiting efforts upon Germans, Swedes, and people of the Mennonite faith, a fact that the list obviously reveals.

Gracy's story of the Littlefield lands stops abruptly at 1920, but the town's growth did not. According to the 1960 census its population approximated ten thousand people, a far more optimistic figure than the "natural beauty" of the country would lead the average cross-country traveler to imagine—especially one who travels U.S. 84, northwest of Lubbock. □

W. Eugene Hollon *is in the Department of History at the University of Toledo.*

The Battle for Alaska Statehood by Ernest Gruening, U.S.S. *(University of Alaska Press, $6.95)*.

By Jeanette P. Nichols

When the people of the forty-ninth State decided to have a centennial celebration of their purchase, scholarly Alaskans, led by Robert Frederick of Alaska Methodist University at Anchorage and Morgan Sherwood of the University of California at Davis, made plans for the historical commemoration. Obtaining notable collaboration from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Historical Association, they assembled some five hundred participants at a conference sponsored by the Alaska Methodist University, June 8–10, 1967.

Furthermore, the publications office of the University of Alaska, located adjacent to Fairbanks, invited the four political leaders most active in pressing for statehood at Washington — Senators Bartlett and Gruening, Representative Rivers, and former Governor Egan — to contribute their personal recollections of the struggle for statehood, in order to comprise an inclusive centennial volume. Unfortunately, only one of the four, Senator Gruening, has been sufficiently concerned with history to crowd into the taxing life of a politician the writing of his reminiscences.

Senator Gruening has been more immersed in pressing for statehood than any other individual. No sooner had he graduated from Harvard with his M.D.

Frederick Jackson Turner

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Narrative by Wilbur R Jacobs
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Wyoming, 1868-1896

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by Lewis Gould
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Bartlett's West

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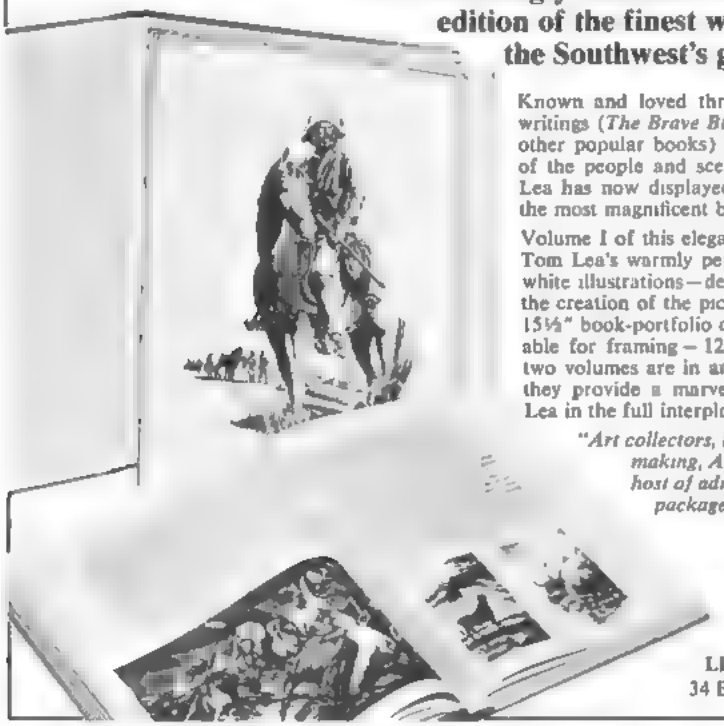

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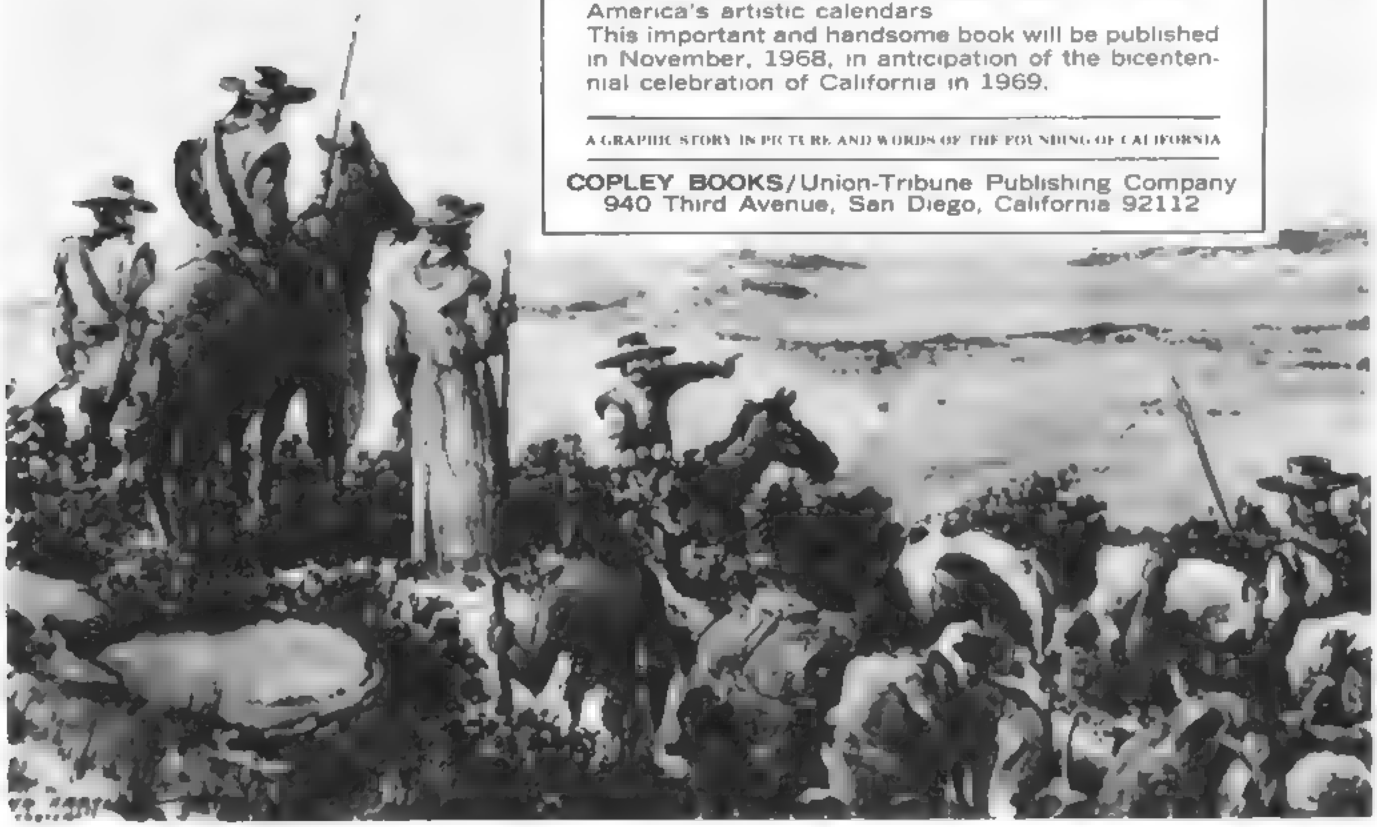

than he turned to a career in journalism with a liberal slant and spent twenty-one years in that field. For the next five years he served as Director of the Division of Territories, Island Possessions of the Department of Interior, an assignment certain to foster proclivities towards advocacy in an individual determined to fight frustrations. Of these he had a highly stimulating amplitude during his fourteen years (1939–1953) as Governor of Alaska. By 1945 he had decided that the area's revenues could not be met short of statehood, and within the next year it was endorsed by a popular vote. From this point on, Alaskan documentation in the archives of the Territory, Congress, and the Departments at Washington abounded with his pleadings for more effective fulfillment of Alaska's economic and political potential.

The Battle for Alaska Statehood generously credits the achievement of statehood to "all the people of Alaska," rather than to any one person or group of persons. Further, Gruening observes that the definitive account waits upon "a vast amount of painstaking research," for which time is not now available. For the present he fulfills his promise to the centennial planners with eight little chapters, sketching efforts before the Territorial Legislature, and the Congress in Washington, with emphasis upon House and Senate hearings. The major arguments against statehood and his manner of countering them are summarized in reproduction of his 1947 testimony before a House Committee in Ketchikan, and his keynote address, delivered before Alaska's remarkable Constitutional Convention of late 1955, on "Let Us End American Colonialism." The testimony of opponents, quoted from the hearings, fill in some information on what he was struggling against. Some five pages of notes, a dozen illustrations, eleven pages of index, and a few human interest recollections add to the usefulness of this short narrative. □

Jeanette P. Nichols, *author of a history of Alaska, is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania*

Travelers in Texas, 1761–1860 by Marilyn McAdams Sibley *(University of Texas Press, $5 00).*

BY JOE B. FRANTZ

SOMETIMES ONE GETS the feeling that every halfway literate person who came to the New World must have written his memoirs. These records have the advantages and disadvantages of writings by the untrained. Their authors frequently see things afresh, and just as frequently are impossibly discursive. To get through the travel literature of colonial and pioneer Texas alone is the work of a lifetime. The accounts run into the hundreds

Here the author has performed an adroit and sensitive distillation of the two hundred most important travel accounts. The book not only is going to save us lazy pseudoscholars considerable investigation, but it is downright interesting. This is no compilation of travel accounts, a paragraph here and several pages there, laid end-to-end either topically or chronologically. Instead, it is a skillful interweaving that ranges back and forth like Aldous Huxley's *Point and Counterpoint,* and emerges unified and significant.

There are happy accounts: "The character of the people (of San Antonio) is care-free, they are enthusiastic dancers, very fond of luxury." That was San Antonio in 1828; it is San Antonio in 1968. Heritages aren't easily displaced. Of course, San Antonio had its other side, as the author also points out: It was, she writes, "a place where tempers sometimes flared and knives flashed, where monte games and fandangoes took place by night, and where naked woman bathed publicly by day." The games have changed, and the women have moved indoors with the advent of plumbing, but the tempers and the knives and the gaming go on.

The book presents a mine of ideas. If sociologists had a better sense of history, they could dig deliriously all day and come up with all sorts of explanations for the indigenous characteristics of Texas. For instance, miscegenation was tolerated so long as the country was sparsely settled. Not until people began to get used to seeing neighbors did the old racial attitudes assert themselves. In the 1830's John Ferdinand Webber entangled himself in a "low amour" with

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another man's slave. When the slave-woman gave birth to a child, Webber purchased both of them and married the woman legally. They lived in peace and acceptance until Webberville began to lose its thinness (it's not exactly thickly-settled yet). Then Webber's children were not allowed to attend school, their tutors were threatened, and finally white injustice caused him to sell out and move to the Rio Grande. What price progress!

Joe B. Frantz, a member of the editorial board of The American West, *is editor of the* Southwestern Historical Quarterly.

How to Kill a Golden State by William Bronson *(Doubleday, $6.95).*

The California Revolution edited by Carey McWilliams *(Grossman, $6.50).*

Throughout its history, California —Bayard Taylor's "panther of the splendid hide"—has served as a case study in the use and misuse of environment and the fermentations of an urban society that has more often resembled the witch's cauldron in *Macbeth* than a melting pot. What man has done to the state and to himself in the process is the subject of each of these books, which look upon man and his works in California and do not always find them good

How to Kill a Golden State is a jeremiad, a highly personal outcry raised against what the author contends is an environmental condition rapidly approaching the outlines of a nightmare. In a collection of pictorial essays documenting every embarrassment from depleted stands of redwoods to photochemical smog, Bronson presents a pungent commentary on the end result of an evolutionary process that began when the first river miners of the 1850's picked up and moved a stream, and the first San Francisco merchant erected a pre-neon billboard proclaiming the nutritional delights of Mensman's Peptonized Beef Tonic, or whatever. Bronson's lament is that the processes of history have brought us very nearly to the point of no return; his demand is that we do something about it; his singular contribution is that he provides the answers.

The California Revolution, an anthology of essays on California's postwar excesses, from the rise of the multiversity to an economy disproportionately dependent upon government contracts, is both a reinforcement and an enlargement of the themes running through Bronson's book. All the patterns of California's past—her diverse and perennially exploding population, booming (and sometimes busting) economic drives, and a political pathology dominated by the maverick California voter, who rarely has done what he was expected to do—have been accelerated almost beyond calculation since 1945, an explosion that has profoundly altered the landscape and the society which must inhabit it

California, as Carey McWilliams points out in his introduction, is, and always has been, a revolution—an economic, social, and political revolution—and revolutions are productive of both progress and destruction. California, the "West of the West," has revolutionized the structure of American society in the twentieth century; the question made abundantly clear in both *The California Revolution* and *How to Kill a Golden State* is whether this continuing revolution will produce an uncontrollable social monster or a new American Eden. □

—T. H. W.

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LOOKING WESTWARD

(Continued from page 50)

gook). Fiedler judges Cooper to have been the only classic American writer to have used these basic myths in his art, yet Cooper publicly doubted that the backwoods "New Man" could survive. Twain, an Indian hater, never was successful in writing a "Western"; nor was Poe, who jumbled it with a "Southern" and desexed it (no passion, no venereal disease), a matter "of critical importance in the disposition of the Western from the center to the periphery of our literature." Fiedler doesn't much care for the recent literature that contrasts the seamier aspects of the West to the expurgated version, either, though he admits that "a joke comes a little closer to getting it straight." It remained only for Owen Wister, an easterner, to set the pattern in his book with a "Southern" title (black means villain, sensual means violence). Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Ernest Hemingway, and Nathaniel West added distortions of their own.

Consequently, writers of the New Western "treat the oldest encounter between Whites and Indians as farce," replacing "nostalgia with parody, sentimentality with mockery, polite female masochism with gross male sadism." Fiedler has reference to such authors as John Barth, Ken Kesey, James Leo Herlihy, and Leonard Cohen, whose stock in trade includes anti-Pocahontases, runaway males (hippies and the like), and drug users (moved by hallucinations rather than nostalgia). Europeans thought Columbus was crazy; today's writers connect madness with the West.

FOR READERS who are overwhelmed by Fiedler's creative powers, a more conventional, if less interesting, interpretation of our national literature in terms of an escape to the West can be found in David A. Noble's **The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden: The Central Myth in the American Novel Since 1830** *(George Braziller, $5.95).* This book parallels the theme of Noble's earlier book *Historians Against History* (see my column in THE AMERICAN WEST, July, 1968). He claims:

> Our major novelists, from James Fenimore Cooper to Saul Bellow, are public philosophers and theologians who continually test the national faith in an American Adam living in a New World Eden against their experience with the human situation; they must test the validity of innocence as the American condition.

Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville rejected the idea of America as a timeless Eden, whereas Twain, Howells, and James accepted the myth until their experiences taught them otherwise. Norris, Crane, and Dreiser, the so-called "naturalists," reacted in different ways to the concept of surviving innocence and progress, but, finally, only Crane was truly pessimistic. The final third of Noble's book, in which nine twentieth-century authors are discussed, suffers from the consistent application of a theme too narrow to embrace works of large dimensions. Like Vernon Parrington before him, though without Parrington's stylistic virtues, Noble works too hard at fitting everything into his thematic structure.

The contrast with Fiedler is striking, for Fiedler has a theme (or themes) but no obtrusive structure; he runs the danger of being disorderly and even superficial, but not tedious. Fiedler assumes his readers' acquaintanceship with American literature, while Noble conveniently summarizes the plots of the books he treats; he sees things, indeed points them out, while Fiedler sees *into* things — one man is heavy-handed, the other high-handed.

One cannot read Fiedler without being reminded of D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), though Fiedler is no moralizer. Note, for example, the following passage from Lawrence.

> There has been all the time, in the white American soul, a dual feeling about the Indian. First was Franklin's feeling, that a wise Providence no doubt intended the extirpation of these savages. Then came Crevecoeur's contradictory feeling about the noble Red Man and the innocent life of the wigwam.

This dualism has been explored in a manner congenial to us fact-loving historians in R. H. Pearce's *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (1953). Orthodox students of *belles lettres* will probably also find Richard Foster, ed., *Six American Novelists of the Nineteenth Century* (University of Minnesota, $6.50), most suitable. The essays on Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Howells, and James are by well-known scholars.

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CHARLES PORTIS'S much-celebrated novel, **True Grit** *(Simon and Schuster, $4.95)*, is certainly not a New Western by Fiedler's definition, devoid as it is of heterosexuality, homosexuality, drugs, madness, even Indians. Nowhere do we see an assertion of American innocence, certainly not in the heroine, fourteen-year-old Mattie Ross, who is out to avenge the murder of her father. Rather, we see the Western stated in its classic form, a la Wister: pursuit of justice outside the law with violence — a generally antisocial point of view that has reached its culmination in "Impeach Earl Warren." Listen to Rooster Gogburn, Mattie's friend.

> Judge Parker knows. He is a old carpetbagger but he knows rats. We had a good court here till the pettifogging lawyers moved in on it. You might think Polk Goudy is a fine gentleman to look at his clothes, but he is the sorriest son of a bitch that God ever let breathe. I know him well. Now they have got the judge down on me, and the marshal too. The rat-catcher is too hard on the rats. That is what they say. *Let up on them rats!*

Indeed, the story is told so patly that we cannot be sure whether Portis is spoofing. But the tale is gripping throughout; the conclusion, breath-taking. And it is that rare book you can give to your father or your son (at least, I did) for good reading. □

THE TRUTH ABOUT ANVILS

Editor's Note: *In our July, 1968 number, we included a brief outline of what we had been led to believe was the proper way to fire an anvil in celebration of an old-time Fourth of July. As an illustration of the follies of inadequate research, we offer the observations of a reader who obviously knows more about anvil-firing than we do.*

July 4, 1968

Sir

Referring to the instructions for firing an anvil on page 37 of your July issue, it is to be hoped that no one follows them. . . . As to the real way to fire an anvil: The blacksmith takes a short length of round iron rod, say an inch or so in diameter, heats it red hot, and hammer-welds it into a torus, or ring, about the size of a large doughnut. He files a narrow groove across one face of the torus, so that a "touch hole" extending from the space inside it to the space outside it is formed. The ring is laid on the smooth face of an anvil with the groove at the bottom, filled level full with fine black powder, and the second anvil is placed with its smooth side down on top of the filled ring. A small pile of fine powder is tamped against the outside of the ring opposite the touch hole, a suitable long fuse is tucked into the pile, and the assembly is ready to fire.

Next time, when giving advice about handling explosives, and particularly about "dynamite caps," it would be well to have it checked with someone who knows the subject.

Walter G. Miller,
Berkeley, California

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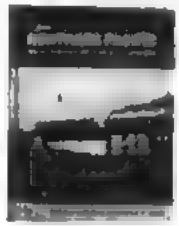

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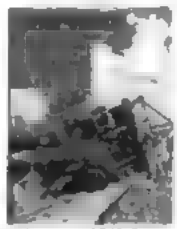

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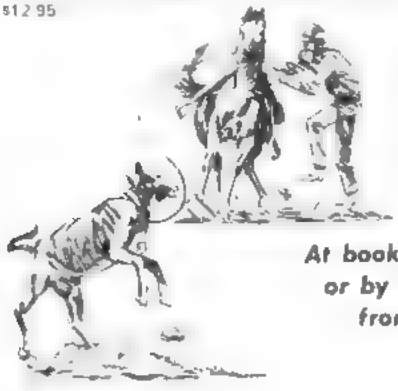

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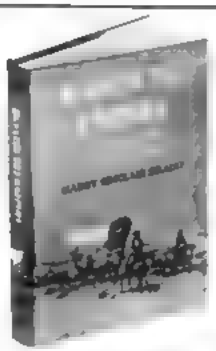

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SPLENDID RANGER
(Continued from page 49)

are ungrammatical sentences and careless errors; spurious on one occasion is "spurtous"; were, "weer"; the, "th"; and General Funston, "Funstrum". Collation and editing are so inexcusably poor that one is inclined to wonder also about the efficacy of the research.

But the book is most seriously flawed by the failure of authors John H. Jenkins and H. Gordon Frost to venture any sort of analysis. Did any of those fifty-three ghosts come home to haunt the old lawman? Or was his the serenity born of knowing his acts received a higher countenance? Was that kick to the "groin" intended to denigrate as well as to incapacitate? Was he often arrogant and sometimes just plain mean? The authors find not a trace of clay about their idol's feet, and perhaps there was none. But one cannot escape the feeling that somewhere among the sticks and stones of history, the real Frank Hamer has been lost. □

Jack Burrows *is in the Department of History at San Jose State College.*

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Explorers and Settlers: Historic Places Commemorating the Early Exploration and Settlement of the United States *(National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Volume V, National Park Service, U. S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C., 1968; 506 pp., maps, illus., notes, biblio., index, $3.50)*
edited by ROBERT FERRIS ‡

Explorers of the Mississippi: A History of the Conquistadors, Voyageurs, and Charlatans, Who Discovered, Opened Up, and Exploited the Father of Waters *(Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1968, 181 pp., illus., biblio.).*
by TIMOTHY SEVERIN ‡

Fantasies of Gold *(University of Arizona, Tucson, 1968, 135 pp., illus., $6.50).* With Joan Ashby Henley. by E. B. "TED" SAYLES ‡

Finlay's River *(William Morrow and Co., New York, 1968, 315 pp., illus., maps, biblio., $6.95).* by R. M. PATTERSON ‡

Formal Education and Culture Change: A Modern Apache Indian Community and Government Education Programs *(University of Arizona, Tucson, 1968, 132 pp., biblio., $5.00)*
by EDWARD A. PARMEE ‡

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is the last bimonthly issue in which "Current Western Books" will appear. Beginning with the January 1970 issue of the magazine, a cumulative index of all books received and those reviewed by THE AMERICAN WEST REVIEW *during the previous year will be published.*

It is our hope that such an annual compilation will be of more general use to the historian, the librarian, and the layman interested in western history than the somewhat fragmentary bimonthly listing. While we will continue to exclude privately printed and limited edition materials, every effort will be made to assure that the annual index to western books is as comprehensive as possible.

Fort Defiance and the Navajos *(Pruett Press, Boulder, Colo., 1968, 124 pp., illus., source notes; pap., $2.75; cloth, $4.00).*
by MAURICE FRINK ‡

I'm Frank Hamer: The Life of a Texas Peace Officer *(Pemberton Press, Austin, 1968, 305 pp., illus., biblio., notes, index, $7.50).*
by JOHN H. JENKINS and GORDON FROST †49

The Frontier Mind: A Cultural Analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman *(University of Kentucky, Lexington, 1957; 264 pp., notes, index, pap., $2.50).* by ARTHUR K. MOORE ‡

Gold in the Woodpile: An Informal History of Banking in Oregon *(University of Oregon Books, Eugene, 1967; 335 pp., illus., $8.50).*
by O. K. BURRELL ‡

Great American Cattle Trails *(Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1968, illus., maps, index, $5.00).* by HARRY SINCLAIR DRAGO *59

The Great Buffalo Hunt: Its History and Drama and Its Role in the Opening of the West *(University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1968, 324 pp., illus., biblio.).* Illustrated by Nick Eggenhofer. by WAYNE GARD ‡

Hood's Texas Brigade in Poetry and Song *(Hill Junior College, Hillsboro, Texas, 1968, 296 pp., illus., biblio., n.p.)*
edited by COLONEL HAROLD B. SIMPSON ‡

How to Kill a Golden State *(Doubleday, Garden City, N. Y., 1968, 224 pp., illus., $6.95)*
by WILLIAM BRONSON †56

Incredible Detective: The Biography of William J. Burns *(Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968; 224 pp., illus., biblio., $5.95).* by GENE CAESAR ‡

The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest *(University of Kentucky, Lexington, 1968; 288 pp., biblio., index, $2.25).*
by CHARLES C. ALEXANDER ‡

Land of Many Frontiers: History of the American Southwest *(Oxford Press, New York, 1968, maps, endpapers, $7.50).* by ODIE B. FAULK *59

Littlefield Lands: Colonization of the Texas Plains, 1912–1920 *(University of Texas, Austin, 1968, 161 pp., illus., notes, biblio., index, $5.00).* by DAVID B. GRACY, II †52

Los Angeles: A Profile *(University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1968, 138 pp., map, biblio., index, $2.95).* by W. W. ROBINSON ‡

Lost Bonanzas *(Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1968, maps, index, $5.00).*
by HARRY SINCLAIR DRAGO *59

Machaquila *(Hastings House Publishers, Inc., New York, 1968, 253 pp., illus., biblio., $6.95)*
by ALBERT LISI ‡

Maheo's Children: The Legend of Little Dried River *(Chilton Books, Philadelphia, 1968, 148 pp., illus., biblio., index, $6.95).*
by WILL HENRY ‡

Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History *(Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1963; 559 pp., notes, indexes, pap., $2.85)* Reprint of the Johns Hopkins Press 1935 edition. by ALBERT K. WEINBERG ‡

Mavericks *(Houghton Mifflin, $3.25).*
by JACK SHAEFER ‡

Mining Camp Days *(Howell-North Books, Berkeley, 1968; 229 pp., frontispiece map, illus., index, $5.00).* by EMIL W. BILLER ‡

Northern Pacific *(Superior, Seattle, $13.95)*
by CHARLES R. WOOD *52

Old Wolfville: Chapters from the Fiction of Alfred Henry Lewis *(Antioch Press, Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1968, 260 pp., illus., $6.00).* Illustrations by Frederic Remington.
intro. and commentary by LOUIS FILLER ‡

Over There with O'Ryan's Roughnecks *(Superior, Seattle, $12.95).*
by WILLIAM F. CLARKE *52

A Pictographic History of Oglala Sioux *(University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1968; 337 pp illus., notes, app , biblio , limited ed , $17.95)* Drawings by Amos Bad Heart Bull
by HELEN H. BLISH *51

Pioneer Portraits *(University of Arizona, Tucson, 1968, 240 pp., illus., $4 95)*
by FRANK C. LOCKWOOD ‡

Pioneer Surveyor Frontier Lawyer, the Personal Narrative of O. W Williams *(Texas Western Press, El Paso, 1968; 350 pp., illus , $10.00*
edited with annotations by S. D. MYRES ‡

Portrayal of the Call to California *(Copley books, Union Tribune Press, San Diego)* Photographs by Harry Crosby
edited by RICHARD F. POURADE *54

Rand McNally National Park Guide *(Rand McNally & Company, Chicago, 1968, c. 1967. 164 pp., illus , maps, index, pap. , $2.95)* With a foreword by George B. Hartzog, Jr Director, National Park Service
by MICHAEL FROME ‡

Rebels of the Woods The I W W. in the Pacific Northwest *(University of Oregon Books, Eugene, 1968, 230 pp , $7 50)*
by ROBERT L. TYLER ‡

The Return of the Vanishing American *(Stein and Day, New York, 1968, 192 pp., index, $5 95).* by LESLIE A. FIEDLER *50

Roads to Empire *(Dodd, Mead & Co , New York, 1968, illus., biblio., index, $6 95,*
by HARRY SINCLAIR DRAGO *59

Scurry County Style *(University of Texas, Austin, 1968 $5 00)* by VIOLA M PAYNE ‡

Sociology and History Methods *(Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1968, 423 pp., $7 95,*
edited by SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET and RICHARD HOFSTADTER ‡

The Star Listeners *(Academe Press, Santa Maria, Calif., 1967; 246 pp., n.p.)*
by DONALD O. JOHNSON ‡

A Tenderfoot in Colorado *(University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1968, 282 pp , illus., n.p)* Introduction by Jay Monaghan
by R. B. TOWNSHEND ‡

This Was Wheat Farming *(Superior, Seattle, $12 95).* by KIRBY BRUMFIELD *52

True Grit *(Simon & Schuster, New York, 1968, 215 pp., $4.95).* by CHARLES PORTIS *50

Via Western Express and Stagecoach: California's Transportation Links with the Nation, 1848–1869 *(University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1968, 158 pp , illus., biblio , $1.65)*
by OSCAR OSBURN WINTHER ‡

Vincennes Portal to the West *(Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968, 210 pp , illus., biblio , $7.95).* by AUGUST DERLETH ‡

Waterfowl. Their Biology and Natural History *(University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1968, illus., biblio , $8 95).* by PAUL A. JOHNSGARD *51

Western Outlaws *(Crowell Collier Press, New York, 1968, 152 pp , illus., biblio., index, $3 50).* by VINCENT PAUL RENNERT ‡

Where the Old West Never Died *(The Naylor Co., San Antonio, 1968, 121 pp , $4 95)*
by PAUL SANFORD ‡

Where the Wind Blew Free *(W. W Norton, $3 75)* by GENE JONES ‡

Will Soule Indian Photographer at Fort Sill, 1869–1874 *(Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles, 1968, 128 pp., 85 photos, $12 50)*
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THE AFFLUENT SOCIETIES

(Continued from page 23)

The central authority of the chiefdom can satisfy all these requirements

Specialized work, such as hunting whales or seals, making canoes, carving totem poles, netting fish, tended to be perpetuated in families in the Northwest Coast, with the skills increasing from generation to generation. Certain families eventually assumed the roles of guilds in medieval times. In addition to the manual skills passed on from father to son (or from uncle to nephew), something else was needed—and that was ritual knowledge. A young man must first dream that he could perform the work he was destined for. Even though he came from a long line of wood-carvers, he nevertheless still needed a vision as assurance that he could perform adequately as a wood-carver. That is why the Northwest Coast youth was enthusiastic in his search for a vision. He flayed his body with thorns and immersed himself in cold lakes. Visions came to the youths almost in proportion to their rank. A wealthy man's son quickly found the spirit helper who had helped his ancestors to become specialists in a particular kind of work. A poor youth usually had only weak or uninteresting visions, so he ended up in a less specialized occupation, perhaps performing only the menial task of gathering wood.

The results of specialization among the Northwest Coast Indians were most apparent in their art. All Northwest Coast art has a more or less uniform style that is instantly recognized by the museum viewer. Figures of animals and mythical beings were carved or painted—usually with almost unvarying symmetry and with a tendency, approaching agoraphobia, to fill every inch of the surface—on totem poles, house fronts, canoes, wooden boxes, eating utensils, in fact practically any surface. All the art was produced in the context of a status society. A Northwest Coast Indian would have regarded as ridiculous the thought that a house-front carving served to make the house more attractive. Such a carving had only one justification: It glorified the social and economic position of the house owner and aroused the envy of his neighbors. The most dramatic and best known manifestation of Northwest Coast art was the huge totem pole—a quite misleading name given these carvings by whites. A pole that displayed a bear, an eagle, and a beaver, with a few mythological beings thrown in for good measure, represented not a totem but simply a crest, a pride in one's ancestry and a glorification of high rank. The person who paid to have the pole carved and painted also had this same combination of figures painted or carved elsewhere: on a mortuary pole alongside the grave of a relative, on his household furnishings, on the posts and beams of his house, and on the family's canoes.

Many reasons have been given for the production of art in different cultures: religious adoration, magic, esthetics, and so forth. But probably no other culture besides the Northwest Coast had ridicule and boasting as its incentive for art. A totem pole was intended to outface and browbeat the neighbors by telling how distinguished its owner and his ancestors were. Among the great events that a chief might want recorded in a new pole was the way in which he outwitted another chief, and for that reason some poles are nothing more than billboards that advertise the humiliation inflicted upon someone else.

Seeing the weathered and cracked poles, either in a museum or still in place in Alaska and British Columbia, one is likely to consider them to be of great antiquity. The truth is that almost all are quite recent—most of them less than a hundred years old, with only a few as old as a hundred and fifty years. So a question arises: To what extent are totem poles an indigenous art? The first totem pole was not described by a white explorer until 1791, yet more than a hundred vessels from Europe and the United States had already visited the Northwest Coast to trade during the twenty years before that. Some of these ships had in their crews Filipinos and Hawaiians who might have passed on the art to the Indians, indeed, the closest approximation to totem poles anywhere in the world exists in the islands of the Pacific Ocean

The question of whether totem poles are indigenous or resulted from alien contacts is not an idle one, for the answer may help to explain how cultures change. First, the fact is inescapable that the **idea** of the totem pole was indigenous to the Northwest Coast culture: One function of the totem pole was its connection with the mortuary rites for a chief, and this tradition existed long before the arrival of the first whites. Second, although the earliest white explorers did not report any large totem poles, they did report that the custom of painting a crest for a house or a grave was an ancient and honored one on the Northwest Coast. But it is also true that previous to the coming of the whites, these Indians possessed no metal tools, and the carving of the huge totem poles was impossible without them. So the conclusion is that when one looks at a totem pole in a museum, he sees both a fascinating concept as well as a mere object. The idea of a totem pole had been part of the Northwest Coast culture for perhaps thousands of years, yet the idea could not be executed until the technology of iron tools was available

The Northwest Coast culture was one in which social rank was exemplified by economic wealth. The two went hand in hand. Common to almost the entire Northwest Coast was wealth in the form of dentalia shells. But to interpret dentalia as money is to misunderstand the culture of the Northwest Coast Indians. They did not translate the cost of something into a certain number of shells, then decide whether or not it was worth the purchase price. An Indian did not need money to buy food or clothes, but he did need it to purchase social recognition. Ownership of a large number of shell strings was not a way to improve his diet or his haberdashery, but it did confer prestige.

Status, as demonstrated by economic wealth, constantly had to be reaffirmed in the Northwest Coast. A man who wanted to maintain his rank was almost constantly handing out small gifts. If invited to a feast, he had to tip whoever invited him. If someone mentioned his name with reverence, the immediate reward was a gift. If he stumbled at a ceremonial—which exposed him to possible ridicule, with its resultant loss of status—he had to give presents to the onlookers to restore his dignity. For these reasons he left his house in the morning wearing several blankets that he could give to people who performed important services for him during the day; he also carried many lesser presents that he tossed away as casually as a modern American tips a delivery boy.

The really amazing thing about the Northwest Coast economy system was that it worked without laws to enforce it. It was kept going by vanity, prestige, and ridicule. Economic products were assembled in vast surpluses, and they flowed in the direction of the chief via his nobles and their even lowlier satellites. Perhaps the reason the system worked was that the participants sensed that sooner or later they would get back a comparable amount of goods at the feast known as a potlatch. Potlatches were given as soon as a group of people could amass enough property to serve as hosts; but the memorable potlatches were those given by the chiefs. The chiefdom gathered surpluses from the whole population, and then its chief feasted another chief. Everyone understood that in a year or two the guest chief would reciprocate, at which time his surplus goods would be given as presents to the chief who had been his host.

As soon as plans for a potlatch were announced, vast quantities of oil, carvings, blankets, iron tools, and other valued items were assembled, sometimes, for a really memorable potlatch, years of preparation were necessary. Everyone contributed willingly to the potlatch, for it was an opportunity once again to validate rank.

If anyone lagged in participation, he might find himself dropped down several notches. A potlatch also offered an opportunity to humiliate another lineage or another chief by hosting a grander potlatch than had been received previously. The competition grew to such an extent that given away at one Kwakiutl potlatch were eight canoes, six captives, fifty-four elk skins, two thousand silver bracelets, seven thousand brass bracelets, and thirty-three thousand blankets—and the guests consumed about fifty seals.

At its very end, the potlatch degenerated into such an orgy of waste and competitive destruction that the system devoured itself. The Northwest Coast chiefdoms had originated the potlatch as one way to redistribute the surplus with which their seas and forests had endowed them But the whites, in their scramble to obtain sea-otter and fur-seal pelts, pumped vast amounts of fresh wealth into a system already trying to cope with a surplus. The potlatch simply could not handle the new flood of mass-produced fabrics, guns, metal kitchen utensils, cheap jewelry, steel tools, and other products of industrialized Europe and the United States. So one cause for the explosion of the potlatch was the deluge of white wealth that the Northwest Coast surplus economies did not need. A second factor was that diseases introduced by the whites' trading ships and the deadly warfare due to the whites' guns caused Northwest Coast populations to plummet. Fewer Indians were available to share the fantastic abundance. Furthermore, the numerous deaths left open more noble titles and crests than there were persons of high rank to bear them.

Competitive potlatching went wild, particularly so among the Kwakiutl, where an intricate system of credits to finance the feasts developed Despite the belief of early anthropologists, there was no fixed rate of interest. A typical interest charge for a loan of less than six months was about 20 per cent interest; for six months to a year, 40 per cent; for a year, 100 per cent. But if the borrower had poor credit, the rate might rise to 200 per cent for less than a year. The borrower then promptly loaned out what he had borrowed to someone else, at an even higher rate of interest if he could get it. Within only a few decades, everyone was in debt to everyone else.

We, trained in a capitalistic society, are horrified by the financial panic that would have resulted if just one person called in his loans. But it never occurred to a Northwest Coast Indian to do that The point of his loans was not to make a profit, but rather to validate the higher rank he was reaching for. If he called in his loan, it would stop earning prestige and obligations for him. One escape valve, though, prevented the inflated economy from bursting: the destruction of "coppers," hammered and decorated sheets of raw metal about three feet long that the Indians had obtained from whites. A copper was like a bank note of very high denomination. At first it represented several thousand blankets. But as the demand for the scarce coppers grew, they rose in value again and again, until each was worth blankets almost beyond calculation.

A contender for rank ultimately found himself in a position whereby the only way he could humiliate a wealthy rival was to destroy one of the precious coppers. The act was equivalent to wiping out all the debts owed to him. It was an incredible price to pay, but the man who made such a dramatic gesture no doubt rose meteorically in rank.

The chiefdom possessed potential for expansion because of its own internal growth, and because it could absorb additional people through conquest and even through the desire of a nearby tribe to become part of the redistributing system. Records exist of bands and tribes that voluntarily joined Northwest Coast chiefdoms, undoubtedly because they recognized the economic benefits. Such growth was of advantage to the chiefdom, for it usually incorporated a group that inhabited a different sort of environment and could bring new products into the redistributional system.

Bands and tribes never fought for additional living space or to increase their population, as they lacked the complex social organization to integrate the conquered peoples into their own societies. Chiefdoms, however, easily assimilate conquered peoples and occupy their lands, and that is why true warfare appeared for the first time at this level of social organization. Northwest Coast warfare was not the skirmish and the ambush of the Iroquois or the coups ceremony of the Plains Indians. Rather, Northwest Coast wars were expeditions organized to exterminate or capture the enemy and to win his lands and wealth.

Yet as the chiefdom grows it contributes to its own decline. Usually it becomes so large that it no longer can redistribute goods efficiently. In that case, the citizens whose voluntary compliance is the cornerstone of the economic system may decide to leave it. When a man gets to be number 987 in the ranking system, sooner or later it occurs to him to join with Mr. 986 and some of the other lesser figures to form a chiefdom of their own. They are so far removed from the central authority that their departure is scarcely noticed. Nor could the chief force them to remain within the redistribution system, for a chief lacks police power to carry out his wishes.

The expansion and fragmentation of chiefdoms on the Northwest Coast was of such common occurrence that it is probably characteristic of this level of social organization. Usually some excuse was given for the breakup: warfare, a revolt by malcontents, a dispute over succession to the office of chief, and so on. Often, though, clear and obvious abuses in the office of the chief were the real causes. The chief, the specialist who directed redistribution, consumed a disproportionate amount of the production because of his many wives, his rank-conscious kinsmen, his private shamans, and his personal artisans. Whatever the reason, sooner or later the chiefdom fragmented into smaller groups, and the whole process of waging wars of territorial expansion began again. But any new Northwest Coast chiefdom was as unstable as the old. Every chiefdom is fated to collapse eventually, because it lacks one essential: the use of **legal** force, which does not exist until the level of the Aztec state is reached

The state, as exemplified by the Aztec of Mexico, differed in several important respects from the less complex chiefdom. A Northwest Coast chief commanded great deference; but his power also was limited, in one way especially. He could lead other men into battle, and he was more powerful than anyone else in his society But he lacked the **exclusive** right to use force. His force was not the only force in his society: a kinship group might punish some offender, one lineage might feud with another, a group of warriors might set off on their own to raid a neighboring chiefdom. In a state, on the other hand, no one can use force but the state itself—that is, the ruler and his legally sanctioned delegates such as the police and army. Feuding in a state, unlike a chiefdom, is punished severely, for its very presence means that someone besides the state is making use of force. Exclusive force is what converts a chiefdom into a state, causing far-reaching changes in the entire society: the rise of political classes, slavery, wars of colonization, specialized warrior and priestly classes that function to preserve orthodoxy, a rising middle class, and artisan guilds. The mere addition of exclusive force to the chiefdom pattern brings us from the primitive world to a more familiar one. □

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Peter Farb, *an ecologist and naturalist, is a consultant to the Smithsonian Institution, Curator of Indian Cultures at the Riverside Museum, New York City, and author of* The Face of North America *(a Book-of-the-Month selection),* Land and Wildlife of North America, *and* The Atlantic Shore: Its Human and Natural History. *His recent* Man's Rise to Civilization as Shown by the Indians of North America from Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State, *from which the above article was adapted, was also a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and has been described as "the most readable serious book about the American Indians since Theodora Kroeber's* Ishi in Two Worlds."

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	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net press run)	36,662	34,119
B. Paid Circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales	820	734
2. Mail Subscriptions	34,353	32,703
C. Total Paid Circulation	35,173	33,437
D. Free Distribution (including samples) by Mail, Carrier, or other means	363	242
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	35,536	33,679
F. Office Use, Left-over, Unaccounted, Spoiled after Printing	1,126	440
G. Total (Sum of E and F—should equal net press run shown in A)	36,662	34,119

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Ronald Bettencourt
Business Manager

Best wishes for your Christmas
Is all you get from me.
'Cause I aint no Santa Claus —
Don't own no Christmas tree.
But if wishes was health and money,
I'd fill your buck-skin poke,
Your codor would go hungry
An' you never would be broke.

Charles M. Russell's Christmas greeting to Malcolm Mackay of Tenafly, New Jersey, 1914
(from the Mackay Collection, Montana Historical Society).

THE AMERICAN WEST